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**"Just a Temp": Expectations and Experiences  
of Women Clerical Temporary Workers**

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COMPLETED

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## **Executive Summary**

The contingent workforce, in general, and the temporary workforce, in particular, are expanding at remarkable rates. Some analysts argue that the increase in contingent jobs is employer-driven. Employers use contingent work to decrease their ties and responsibility for their workforce and to decrease labor costs. An alternative explanation, however, asserts that workers' preferences for jobs with alternative schedules are driving the increase in contingent workforce. Specifically, temporary work is regarded as an ideal means for women with children to manage employment and family responsibilities and as a way for women with little work experience or poor skills to gain entree into the labor force.

Missing from the debates about the causes and consequences of temporary work is systematic empirical evidence about its advantages and disadvantages for individuals. This study contributes the crucial dimension of the direct experiences of temporary workers. Since the majority of temporary workers are women and since clerical occupations dominate among temporary positions, this study focused on women who work for temporary services in administrative support positions.

The study analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data collected from a survey of temporary workers in Philadelphia and its suburbs, follow-up indepth interviews with a subsample of the survey respondents, and personal interviews with owners and managers of temporary services.

This study corroborates the conclusion reached by other analyses that temporary work is not a life cycle choice for most women. Women's preferences and choices do not account for the increased dependence on temporary workers. Neither does temporary work afford special advantages for women with families.

Rather, most women use temporary work as a substitute for regular, full-time employment while in a transient situation: as an alternative to unemployment, a means of finding permanent work, or to earn the equivalent of full-time pay for a limited period.

Young women and black women are over-represented among temporary workers. Young women are more likely to be in school and to work as temporaries during college breaks. Young women and black women also have higher average unemployment rates. They are more likely than other women to be in-between jobs.

Temporary workers as a group are neither less experienced nor less skilled than other women workers. Young women do not temp primarily for experience or for entree into the labor market. Only a small proportion of the temporary workforce are women re-entering the labor force after raising their children.

For women normally in administrative support occupations, temporary work is an alternative within their occupation. Many hope to find a permanent position from a temporary assignment, and this does indeed happen. Women who usually work in other occupations use temporary work to earn income looking for work in their own field or while they are in a transient situation. Women who have no experience in administrative support occupations are still able to succeed in temporary assignments if they are educated and computer proficient.

The temporary help industry exaggerates both the appeal and the actuality of flexibility. It glosses over the meaning of flexibility, how temporary work provides it, who benefits from it, and the proportion of women who temp primarily to attain flexible work schedules.

Married women and older women are more likely than their counterparts to turn to temporary work in search of flexibility. Older women, in particular, want to work part-time. But neither married women nor older women dominate the temporary workforce.

Temporary work provides limited flexibility. Essentially, flexibility means time off between assignments, without pay, sometimes by choice but sometimes because there are not enough assignments. Most temporary assignments are full-day and full-week. Temporary work allows women to move in and out of the workforce as they need or want, but it does not help them integrate work and other responsibilities on a regular basis.

For most women, temporary work is inferior to permanent jobs in terms of wages, benefits and job security. The rates earned by temporary workers are highly related to the tasks they perform in their assignments and their computer skills. Older women and women with low education receive the lowest level assignments, and consequently, the lowest hourly pay rates.

Temporary work provides some opportunities for skill development and upgrading. Many temporary services, especially the larger, national companies, offer formal training programs. Training typically means self-directed tutorials designed to cross-train in different software packages. This style of training is most accessible to women who are already computer-literate. Similarly, informal on-the-job training opportunities are most accessible to women who already have well-developed skills.

Temporary services offer some employment benefits, but they do not provide comprehensive coverage and few temporary employees ever receive the benefits. Lack of medical insurance is of particular concern, since a large proportion of temporary workers are single or sole-earners with no access to insurance.

Temporary work is characterized by ambiguous employment relations. Temporary services are the legal employers of the temporary workers, but temps are supervised by the client companies. Temporary workers are most critical of the services for the lack of guaranteed income and the lack of benefits associated with temporary work.

Despite the negative aspects of temporary work, many women are grateful that it exists. For many women, even those who do not normally work in clerical positions, temporary work legitimately serves as an alternative to unemployment and a buffer against joblessness.

However, the increased use of temporary workers derives from business requirements - not the needs of workers. Thus temporary work may become less a buffer and more a last resort because fewer jobs permanent jobs are available.

There are good reasons to be concerned about a growing contingent workforce. Contingent jobs are distinguished by their inferior terms of employment: low pay, undependable income, no job security, few or no benefits, limited opportunities for training and advancement. Temporary work is the archetypical contingent work form; temporary workers have no guarantees for continued employment, for the actual work available to them, for consistent wages or thus for income. Wages frequently are lower than wages for comparable permanent positions and the absence of comprehensive benefits further lowers the value of temporary work compared with other jobs.

National policies such as universal medical insurance and family leave can mitigate some of the negative effects of contingent work.

The exceptional growth of the temporary help supply industry and our relatively incomplete understanding of its forms and functions warrant additional research as well as monitoring for possible intervention and regulation.

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## Introduction

Much is asserted about temporary workers' reasons for temping, the conditions under which they work and the consequences of working for temporary services. Supporters of temporary work identify flexible work schedules as its distinguishing feature, and thus promote it as an ideal means for women to manage employment and family responsibilities. Critics of temporary work consider it to be an extreme case of a precarious trend away from permanent, full-time employment. This interpretation views the loosening of employment ties as detrimental to workers because employers are reducing their responsibility for their employees to the minimum obligation of paying an hourly wage.

Neither advocates nor opponents of temporary work, though, have systematic empirical evidence at the individual level to support many of their contentions and conclusions. This study adds the crucial dimension of the direct experiences of temporary workers to the debates about temporary work.

### Contingent Work

Temporary work is one form of a broader category of labor market activity commonly referred to as contingent work, which also includes part-time, home-based, leased, subcontracted and independently-contracted work.<sup>1</sup> Employers use contingent workers to decrease the cost of labor by reducing their fixed workforce.



Contingent jobs are 'bad' jobs characterized by some combination of low wages and/or undependable income, few or no benefits, little or no job security, and limited opportunities for training and advancement.

Contingent jobs are neither entirely innovative nor merely old forms revisited; their attendant conditions have marked some jobs throughout industrialism and beyond. However, the industries using contingent workers and the occupations subject to contingent conditions are expanding. Jobs that previously enjoyed the relatively privileged conditions associated with the primary (or core) labor market are being reorganized as contingent jobs.

The contingent workforce is rapidly increasing. By one estimate, contingent jobs account for half of all new jobs created in the 1980's (Belous 1989a). One-quarter of all workers in the United States - 28 million workers - are employed in contingent jobs (Bureau of National Affairs 1986). The increased demand for contingent workers documented in recent years indicates a long term trend rather than cyclical fluctuation (Christopherson 1988). Contingent work cannot be dismissed as either residual or transitional forms of employment, nor can contingent workers be ignored as an insignificant portion of the workforce.

Much of the concern about employers' escalating reliance on contingent jobs focuses on women and minorities, who historically occupy weaker labor force positions than white men. The majority

of contingent workers are women and minorities, in part because occupational segmentation by gender and ethnicity limits their job opportunities.

As with all broad concepts, there is a tendency to apply the term contingent work abstractly and monolithically. Similarly, women workers are often regarded as homologous. Rather than treat contingent work and contingent workers as unified categories, analyses that delineate the conditions specific to the various forms of contingent work and their consequences for different groups of workers will be most useful in determining appropriate policies.

#### Temporary Work as Contingent Work

Temporary work is the fastest growing segment of the contingent workforce (Belous 1989b). Temporary workers are hired under a number of different arrangements: as limited duration hires, casuals, and independent contractors and through contract labor services and temporary help services (Mayall and Nelson 1982). The majority of the temporary workforce are most likely direct hires, but no comprehensive data about this group exist. Therefore, most estimates of the temporary work force are based on employment figures for the Temporary Help Supply (THS) industry, for which national data have been available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) since 1978.

Growth in the THS industry has surpassed most industries; it increased at an average rate of 11.5 percent a year during the

eighties. Total employment nearly tripled between 1978 and 1988 from 341,000 to 1,016,000. The BLS projects continued growth in this industry through the end of the century, although at a slower rate (4.1% per year) (Personick 1989).

Nationally, the temporary help industry represents 20 percent of jobs in the business services sector of the economy and seven percent of all clerical jobs (Mayall and Nelson 1988). While its share of total private employment is only about one percent, it has contributed a substantial share of new jobs since 1982. Nearly five and a half percent, on average, of the new jobs added between 1981 and 1987 have been with temporary help services (Golden and Appelbaum 1990).

Temporary employees perform a variety of work, including clerical, industrial, medical, technical and professional positions. Clerical positions dominate the temporary workforce, although estimates of the proportion of temporary positions that are clerical vary. (Clerical is used loosely; it is really a shorthand for administrative support occupations.) Carey and Hazelbaker (1986) estimate that clerical occupations comprise 63 percent of all temporary occupations; the National Association of Temporary Services' (NATS) estimate for 1985 was 60 percent (Hartmann and Lapidus 1989); according to 1985 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, 45 percent of THS workers were employed in clerical occupations (Lapidus 1990).

Temporary work in general, and clerical temporary work specifically, is women's work. Approximately two-thirds of

temporary workers are women and ninety percent of clerical temporary jobs are filled by women (Howe 1986). According to 1985 CPS data, 62 percent of all female temp employees were in administrative support jobs, compared with 30 percent of the female labor force as a whole (Lapidus 1990).

The THS industry is concentrated in cities; over 80 percent of temporary service employees work in the 40 largest SMSAs, with the ten largest SMSAs accounting for 40 percent of the industry (Mayall and Nelson 1988). In a survey, the Bureau of National Affairs found that 90 percent of employers in SMSAs with populations over one million use temporary help compared with only 47 percent of employers in rural areas (Bureau of National Affairs 1986).

One commonly espoused explanation for the dramatic increase in temporary work purports that the number of workers who want temporary jobs is increasing; more specifically, that it is women with families who want these jobs to reconcile family and paid work responsibilities. Following this logic, as more women enter the labor force, demand for these jobs will increase (Mayall and Nelson 1982). Howe interprets the higher proportion of women among temporary help service employees as evidence that women are choosing to work for temporary services because of the many benefits available, "...particularly the combination of flexible work schedules and the opportunities to acquire needed experience and job market exposure" (1986:46). He further concludes that "women with family responsibilities are particularly attracted to



temporary employment because it provides flexible work schedules that allows them to reconcile work outside the home with family commitments" (1986:46).

Lapidus analyzes the same 1985 CPS data reported by Howe but comes to a different conclusion about the causal direction of choice. She demonstrates that women with family responsibilities are no more likely than other women in the labor force to choose THS employment. Nor does the widespread availability of temporary work draw into the labor force women who would otherwise not work or seek employment. Women in temporary jobs were indistinguishable from other women in the workforce by marital status, presence of other earners and age of youngest child. Furthermore, they differed significantly in age, marital status and number of children from women not in the labor force (Lapidus 1990).

Golden and Appelbaum corroborate the conclusion that workers' preferences and choices are not producing the increase in temporary employment. They determined that labor supply forces do not account for the growth of temporary work, not even the increased labor force participation rate of married women. Rather, it is driven by employers' responses to cyclical fluctuation in output, intensified foreign competition and fixed labor costs (Golden and Appelbaum 1990). To reduce labor costs, businesses now hire temporary workers in place of permanent workers rather than simply to fill-in for sick or vacationing employees (Oates 1985).

## Goals of the Study

Since the majority of temporary workers are women and since clerical occupations dominate among temporary positions, this study focused on women who work for temporary services in administrative support positions.

A central goal of this study was to provide a detailed account of the women who temp and their motivations for doing so. The study was not designed to determine a precise accounting of the demographic characteristics of the temporary workforce; the CPS provides these data. But demographic data alone are inadequate. As Howe's conclusion that women choose temporary work to reconcile family and work obligations illustrates, assumptions based solely on demographic characteristics can be erroneous. This study demonstrated that women's reasons for temping are integral to defining the groups who temp and that this perspective is necessary to evaluate the match between their expectations and the realities of working for a temporary service.

For more than any other issue associated with temporary work, discussions about temping and flexibility are marred by assumptions and assertions unsubstantiated by empirical data. This study also critically examined the myths and realities of temporary work's much vaunted 'flexibility.'

Finally, the study assessed the advantages and disadvantages of working for a temporary service for different groups of women workers.

## Research Methods

The data analyzed for this study come from three sources: semi-structured, qualitative interviews with fifteen owners and managers of eleven temporary help services in the Philadelphia area; a mail survey of 96 women who were registered with temporary help services in Philadelphia and some of its suburbs; and semi-structured, qualitative interviews with 23 of the survey respondents.

The interviews with representatives of temporary help services provided background information on the industry and on the organization of temporary services. Aside from one phone interview, the data were collected in person; the interviews each lasted approximately one hour. All but two of the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

The services that participated in the interviews varied in size, scope and form of ownership. Three services were large, international companies with between seven and twelve branches in Philadelphia and its suburbs. Two services were mid-size national (with some branches in Canada) companies with six and seven local branches, respectively. Two services were locally-owned franchises of larger companies. Two services were locally-owned and situated in Philadelphia; one had a suburban branch and the other was considering expanding to at least one suburban location. Another small locally-owned service had recently entered the temporary help supply market and was struggling for business; they had more temps registered with them than they

could place in assignments - indeed, they encouraged their employees to register with other services too.

One service was a minority-owned and oriented that "never really got off the ground." All managers and owners interviewed remarked that the increase demand for temporary workers has also increased competition from new temporary services trying to enter this lucrative market. Table 1\* lists the distributions of characteristics of temporary services for the U.S. and the Philadelphia Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSA)."

One temporary help service - a mid-size national service with a center city branch and five suburban branches - participated in the second data collection phase.<sup>2</sup>

Questionnaires were sent to women clerical workers registered with its center city branch and three of its suburban branches.

To ensure variation in the demographic characteristics of the women in the sample, and because there is anecdotal evidence as well as reasonable grounds to think that the temping experience varies for different segments of the workforce, the sampling procedures were designed to produce a mix of city and suburban residents. Although the design planned for an equal number of respondents from each sample group, two-thirds of the temps in the final sample live in Philadelphia suburbs (N = 62) and one-third live in Philadelphia (N = 34).

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\* Tables are appended to the end of the report.

\*\* The Philadelphia PMSA includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania and Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties in New Jersey.



The original data collection plan included three contacts by mail with each person in the sample (an initial letter and questionnaire, a post-card reminder and a second letter and questionnaire) and follow-up phone calls to non-respondents. In the end, the company lawyers advised the president not to release his employees' names and addresses. Instead, his staff addressed and mailed the questionnaires. Response rates suffered since non-respondents could not be re-contacted effectively.

A questionnaire with a letter from the company president and a letter from me was mailed to 153 women registered as temporary workers with the center city branch and 235 women registered with three of its suburban branches. A few weeks after the initial mailing, the service addressed and mailed a follow-up postcard from me to the 388 women who had received the questionnaire.

Only 69 of the women returned a completed questionnaire (an 18% response rate). Four percent were returned from the post office for incorrect addresses. The suburban sample had a higher response rate (25%). Although 58 suburban respondents is disappointingly low, this number is adequate for the analysis. However, only 13 women from the city sample returned a questionnaire (an 8% response rate).<sup>3</sup>

To increase the number of city respondents, I generated a supplemental sample using the following methods: I placed advertisements in eight neighborhood newspapers inviting women temporary workers to participate in the project; three services that denied direct access to their temps later agreed to

distribute a flier about the project with their weekly paychecks; Temple University's Personnel Office sent the questionnaires to the women temps who were on assignment at the university; and I relied upon word-of-mouth to locate possible respondents. These efforts yielded an additional 23 city respondents and four suburban respondents (the latter four by accident).

Nearly two-thirds of the survey respondents indicated on their questionnaire they might participate in a follow-up interview. I conducted the interviews with one-fourth of the respondents ( $N = 23$ ). In choosing whom to interview, I tried to ensure a representative mix of ethnic group, age, marital status, presence of children and sample type (city/suburb) of the respondents, but I also wanted over-sample city women and black women to compensate for their under-representation in the survey data. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each (they range from 30 to 90 minutes). All but five of the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Appendix A lists the characteristics of the respondents who participated in an interview.

The questionnaire was derived from - although it is vastly different than - the instrument Labour Canada developed for its study of women clerical temporary workers (see Cohen and White 1989). In the process of constructing the questionnaire, I interviewed five temporary workers to learn more about the questions to ask and the language to use in the instrument. The interviews with the temporary services also helped to identify

relevant issues. I pre-tested the questionnaire with eight temporary workers who were on assignment at Temple University. See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

### Evaluation of the Sample

The sampling strategies used for this study do not ensure statistical representativeness. However, there is no evidence that the sample is seriously biased in ways that preclude thoughtful analysis.

The age distribution of the sample corresponds to the 1985 CPS data. The mean age of women THS employees from the CPS data was 34 years (Lapidus 1990); 35 was the mean age for this sample. In the CPS sample, a higher proportion of temporary workers were young (one third aged 16-24) compared to all workers (one fifth aged 16 - 24) (Howe 1986). The CPS figure includes men, however, and male temporary workers are much younger on average than all males in the workforce (mean ages 32 versus 39) (Lapidus 1990). Twenty six percent of the women in this sample are between 19 and 24 years old (no participant was younger than 19).

There are no statistically significant differences in the proportion of married women among temporary workers and all women workers (44% and 49% respectively), according to the 1985 CPS (Lapidus 1990). Thirty-eight percent of this sample are married, but this differs dramatically by ethnicity: The proportion of white women in the sample who are married (45%) matches the national figure, but only 16% of the black women in the sample

are married. Married black women may be under-represented in the sample. However, blacks typically are less likely to be married than whites. The owners and managers in the city-based services and branches estimated that most of their black temps are single.

Twenty-nine percent of the women in the sample are black, which is a greater proportion than the national average of 20 percent. Since black women averaged 42% of the women in the Philadelphia labor force in 1989 (PA Department of Labor and Industry 1991), and since black women are over-represented in clerical occupations, the proportion of women temporary workers in Philadelphia who are black is undoubtedly higher than the national average. Unfortunately, there are no data available to estimate their actual proportion. However, every temporary service interviewed for this study estimated that black women comprise the majority (ranging from two-thirds to three-fourths) of their city branches' clerical temporary employees. Two-thirds of the city sample are black women, so the city sample probably reflects black women's accurate proportion of the city's clerical temporary workforce.

To compensate for their low numbers in the survey data (N = 27), black women are intentionally over-represented among the respondents who participated in follow-up interviews. Forty-three percent (N = 10) of the 23 personal interviews were conducted with black respondents. Over a third of the black respondents participated in follow-up interviews compared with one-fifth of the white respondents. The qualitative interview

data enhance my ability to explore the effects of ethnicity upon the experiences of working as a temp.

In general, response rates to mail surveys increase with education. The relatively high level of education of the respondents (80% completed some college or business school beyond high school and 30% have at least a four-year college degree) may indicate a bias in the sample. However, according to the 1985 CPS, THS employees average 14.4 years of education (Lapidus 1990), which is comparable to this sample.

While there is always an element of self-selection in surveys, the women in the supplemental sample had to make an extra effort to participate in the study (i.e. they had to call for information);<sup>4</sup> the rest of the sample received the unsolicited questionnaires through the mail. Therefore, the supplemental sample may be biased toward women who were more interested in the topic, perhaps because they have a longer-term commitment to temping. However, few of the respondents identifies themselves as 'career-temps' and suburban respondents were more likely to do so than city respondents (most of the temps from the supplemental sample are city residents).

It is also plausible that women who are critical of temping would use the study as an opportunity to air complaints. If anything, however, the respondents on the whole feel positive about temporary work.

The concentration of respondents from one temporary service (three-quarters of the total sample, 87% of the suburban group



and 38% of the city group were registered with the same temporary service), especially in the suburban sample, may bias the data on types of assignments available, wage rates, benefits and training opportunities. These biases may be mitigated because most respondents are registered with more than one temporary service, and the suburban respondents are more likely than the city respondents to be registered with at least two services.

### Data Analysis Strategies

The survey data were checked extensively for accuracy and consistency. For the cases that also have interview data, I reviewed the interview transcriptions against the answers and comments on the survey.

I primarily used contingency tables to analyze the survey data, with eight control variables (some chosen a priori and others emerged from the analysis): sample type (city or suburb), ethnicity (black or white), age (under 40, 40 to 49, over 49),\* marital status (single or married), children (presence or absence of children under 18), education (high school degree or less, some post-secondary college or business school, four-year college degree or more), main occupation (self-identified as clerical or not), and level of computer skills (low, medium and high). The

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\* I tried a number of age groups, including each decade separately (there are too few cases for this level of detail), under 30 and 30 plus, under 40 and 40 plus. Women in their forties are a separate category because their results frequently were different from the younger and older women. Their responses suggested they are swing group which sometimes matches the younger women, sometimes the older women.

interval level data were analyzed with difference of means tests and analysis of variance. The qualitative data clarify and illustrate the survey data and supplement when survey data are inadequate. Table 2 contains the description and distributions of the control variables.

Although sample type is one of the control variables, it is not conceptually clear or independent. There is significant overlap between black and city respondents; two-thirds of the city respondents are black and 85 percent of the black respondents live in the city. Only four black respondents live in the suburbs. Similarly, 93 percent of the suburban respondents are white and 84 percent of all white respondents live in the suburbs. As a result of this conflation, residential effects in the data are not easily distinguished from ethnicity effects. There is little reason to think that residence should take priority over ethnicity, except that it may in some sense stand in for social class. There are some issues for which being in the city versus being in the suburbs are logically different (wage rates, for example), so I included variations in the results by sample type in the analysis. For the most part, however, the other demographic variables have logical explanatory priority over sample type.

Because the control variables are highly correlated with each other, because ethnicity and sample type significantly overlap and because sample size precludes analysis with extensive controls, it is not always possible to disentangle the

independent effects of the control variables. Spurious relationships are possible. To the extent that the experiences of working as a temporary employee vary by demographic groups, I cannot always distinguish which variables are 'causing' the effects. I provide suggestive, if not conclusive, evidence and interpretation wherever it is conceptually sound to do so.

In the remainder of this report, I describe the characteristics of the women working as clerical temps; review their reasons for doing so; analyze how temping matches their expectations and serves their needs; discuss the skill requirements of the temp positions and assess the opportunities for training available from temping; report the benefits and remuneration they received; relate where and how temporary work fits into their overall employment history; summarize conclusions and comment on policy issues related to temporary work.

### **Who Are the Temps?**

The term "Kelly Girls" is no longer in vogue, but its connotations continue to underpin popular conceptions of temporary workers. 'Girl' is no accident; it is meant both literally - temps are thought to be inexperienced young women with few skills - and figuratively - temping is considered a side-line, not really work. Another common stereotype portrays temps as suburban women with husbands (who therefore do not need benefits), and children (who therefore do not have time for a real job), whose incomes are supplemental (and who therefore do

not need real incomes). Yet another characterization depicts temporary workers as marginal workers who can neither find nor keep permanent jobs because they are deficient in the skills and habits required for regular employment.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the conventional images of temporary workers are hardly flattering; they depict temporary work as peripheral work performed by second-rate workers.

### The THS Industry Perspectives

Over the last decade, though, as demand for temporary workers has increased and the temporary help supply industry has expanded, temporary services have been cultivating more positive images of temporary workers. The services portray temporary workers as professionals with highly developed skills in office automation. At the same time, the services promote temporary work as an opportunity for women entering or reentering the workforce to gain experience and skills. These two features of temporary work are contradictory, albeit not necessarily mutually-exclusive.

The THS industry extols temping's value to retired women who want "to ease out of the work force" but continue "to earn a little money." And they assert that actors and artists and musicians temp to "keep in touch with the business world" while they heed their creative muses.<sup>6</sup>

But the people whom the industry claims are both the major beneficiaries of temporary work arrangements as well as the

reason temporary employment is increasing are women with children. Temporary work is lauded as the perfect match between women who want flexible work schedules and businesses that need a flexible workforce.

There are of course women who have the traits and who are in the circumstances and who have the needs commonly asserted about temporary workers. Too often, though, answers to the questions of the who's and why's and what's of temporary work are based on assumptions, anecdotes or hearsay. Especially when the focus is on women with children: The answers sound right. It seems reasonable that women with children temp and that they do so because they need flexibility.

It is not entirely possible to identify the characteristics of women temps without presenting their motivation for temping. It is, however, more orderly, so I will describe the characteristics of the women in the sample and then discuss their motivations for working as temps. See Table 3 for a description of the characteristics of the sample.

#### Description of the Sample

One third of the sample are women who live and work in Philadelphia; the other two-thirds live and work in Philadelphia suburbs, most in Montgomery County, which is an affluent suburb located north and west of the city. Black women comprise 29 percent of the sample; white women, 71 percent. The respondents range in age from 19 to 69, with a average of 35. One-quarter of



the women are between 19 and 25 years; one-quarter are between 26 and 29; 14 percent are in their thirties; 17 percent in their forties; 13 percent in their fifties; and the remaining 6 percent are in their sixties. The majority (62%) of the temporary workers in the study are single; 51 percent are single with no dependents and 11 percent are single with dependents. Twenty percent of the survey respondents are married or cohabitating, with no dependents, and 18 percent are married or cohabitating, with dependents.

Just over a quarter of the women have children they either partially or fully support, and only a fifth have children who have not yet finished high school (this includes children who have not yet started school).<sup>7</sup> Only four percent have at least one infant, seven percent at least one preschool child, seven percent at least one child in grade school and nine percent at least one child in high school. Twelve percent of the women live with or help support children who are older than eighteen. Fourteen percent of the participants have one child they are supporting, 10 percent have two, one percent have three and two percent have four children.

The large majority (81%) of women in the sample completed some post-secondary education; only four percent did not graduate high school and only 15 percent stopped with high school. One-third of the sample have some college experience; seven percent have an associate's degree, one-fourth have a bachelor's degree and five percent completed at least some graduate school credits.

Thirteen percent of the women attended business school. One-third of the sample are currently in school and most of these women are matriculated into bachelor degree programs.

Not all clerical temp workers identified administrative support occupations as their primary occupations. Just over half (54%) did, but fourteen percent identified professional or managerial occupations, 16 percent said student (even though some of these women had permanent work experience) and the rest were sales, technical support and service.

Many of the demographic variables (ethnicity, age, marital status, presence of children, education and usual occupation) are differentially distributed by sample type (city versus suburb). Indeed, I deliberately chose women for the study based on residential location because I expected demographic characteristics to vary. Unfortunately, there are not enough cases to distinguish conclusively between sample effects and other variable effects. In particular, as described earlier in this report, the city sample and black control group overlap tremendously. Thus, the distributions for any given demographic group by sample and by ethnicity are usually similar. For example, 62 percent of the respondents are single, but 81 percent of city residents and 84 percent of black women are single compared with 52 percent of suburban residents and 55 percent of white women. A composite description of the two samples follows: City women are more likely than suburban women to be black (68% versus 7%), single (81% versus 52%), younger than

forty years old (76% versus 56%; mean age 33 versus 37), have children (30% versus 14%), and usually work in clerical occupations (73% versus 43%). City women are less likely than suburban women to have completed at least a four year college degree (20% versus 32%) and more likely to have business school experience rather than college (24% versus 7%). This profile also describes the aggregate differences between black and white women in the sample.

Besides being differentially distributed by sample type and ethnicity, the other demographic variables are also interrelated. Age is related to the presence of children, but not as we might expect; it is women in their forties who have children (31% versus 19% of women under age 40 and 6% of women over age 49).<sup>8</sup> Over twice as many married women as single women have children (31% versus 14%). The proportion of women who are married increases with age: 22 percent of women under the age of 40, 53 percent of women in their forties, and 72 percent of women over the age of 49 are married. Half of the entire sample are single women under forty.

Education is inversely related to age; the younger women are more educated. Only 14 percent of women under the age of 50 completed any education beyond a high school degree compared with 44 percent of women aged 50 and older. The average age for women with no education beyond high school is 43 years old, for women with some education beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree it is 35 years old and for women with at least a

bachelor's degree, it is 31 years old. However, suburban women are more likely to have a college degree, even though they are on average older than the city women. And twice the proportion of white women have at least a college degree (33% to 15%), again, even though white women are on average older than black women. None of the women with children have a four year college degree while 35 percent of women without children do and a third of them have at most a high school degree compared with less than a fifth of women without children.

Partly because of its intended scope and research goals and partly because of the unanticipated problems with data collection, this study cannot provide an accurate accounting of the numbers and characteristics of temporary workers in the population at large. The Philadelphia sample may under-represent married women and women with children.

However, demographics alone only frame the issues. Women's reasons for working for a THS service and the degree to which temporary work satisfies their expectations must be considered in developing the categories that represent temporary workers.

### Why Temp?

More than anything else, temporary work is touted as flexible work especially suited to married women with children. There are indeed women who temp in order to achieve a flexible work schedule, but they are not as numerous as has been supposed, nor do they all fit the image of 'mother with children' forwarded

by the industry. Most women (two thirds of this sample) temp as a substitute for regular full-time permanent employment.

The industry also claims that temporary work is ideal for women who want to enter or reenter the workforce. The implicit (indeed, the explicit) message is that temporary work is a way to acquire training and experience. However, only a very small proportion of women (4 percent of this sample) use temporary work specifically to upgrade their skills and gain work experience.

Because the demographic variables are highly interrelated, and because sample size precludes extensive controls, it is difficult to disentangle the effects of various characteristics (if it is marital status or age, for example, that 'causes' the outcome). However, patterns of responses furnish some evidence about relationships among the control variables. For example, the distributions of the most important reason for working as a temporary for black women, single women, and women under forty are essentially the same. Since almost all the black women are young (82%) and single (84%) but only 38% of the young women and single women, respectively, are black, we can conclude that it is age and marital status, not ethnicity, that is most strongly related to their reasons for working as a temporary.

Since the control variables (except presence of children) are correlated with age, I analyzed the relationship between most important reasons for temping and age within each of the other demographic variables. For selected measures, I also examined whether marital status or presence children underlie the results.



Since applying multiple controls results in very small numbers of women in some categories, the results are suggestive.

Table 4 displays the results relevant to this section.

#### Temporary Work As A Substitute For Permanent Work

Two thirds of the respondents used temporary work as an alternative to unemployment, as a means to find permanent work (especially if they were looking for clerical or secretarial work), to support themselves while looking for permanent work in another field, and/or as a way to earn the equivalent of full-time pay for a limited period during which they were unable to hold a permanent job. Most women wanted to work full-time at their assignments, although this varied by control group (57% of the total sample, 77% of black women, 44% of married women). In fact, over half of the women in the sample were looking for a permanent job.

Using temporary work as a substitute for permanent, full-time work is inversely related to age; regardless of marital status, younger women were more likely to be looking for permanent work than older women. However, marital status does influence this decision - younger married women were less likely to be looking for permanent work than younger single women, although they were more likely to be doing so than older married women. And married women with children were less likely than childless married women to be looking for a permanent job.

Single women who support themselves need the equivalent of a full-time income. Only a few respondents, all young women, lived with their parents; 90 percent of the single women lived in single earner households. Older, single women, in particular, used temporary work as an interim strategy to earn income (75% of older single women compared with 14% of older married women).<sup>9</sup>

Over half of the sample were looking for permanent full-time work. They had been looking, on average, nearly eight months; one-quarter had just started looking (less than 2 months) and half of the sample had been looking less than one year. Consistent with their reasons for working for a temporary service, single women - especially single clerical workers - were most likely to be looking for permanent work. A larger proportion of single non-clerical women were temping as an interim strategy while they did something else (e.g. attend school). Only five percent of the women in the sample were looking for permanent part-time work, although in a separate item one-third of the women said they would prefer permanent part-time work to temporary work.

For clerical and secretarial workers, temporary work was an alternative within their occupation; some clerical and secretarial workers hoped to find permanent work as a direct result of their temporary assignments. For nonclerical workers, temporary work was an alternative to their regular (or anticipated) occupation; they used it as a source of income while

looking for permanent work or while in a transient situation (in school, for example).

### Flexibility and Temporary Work

Among the goals of this study are to examine critically the concept of flexibility and to assess the importance of flexibility to women who are temping, the concrete meanings of flexibility, and the realities of how it is achieved - or not - through temporary work.

Married women and women with children were more likely than single women and childless women to choose temporary work specifically for a flexible work schedule; only nine percent of married women with children were temping to find a permanent job. It is surprising, though, that only a fifth of women with children temped so they could spend time with their children. No single mother gave time with children as her most important reason for working as a temp. Even when all the flexibility variables are added together, it is still less than half of the women with children for whom flexibility was their primary motive for working as a temp.

On the other hand, flexibility was the primary reason older women temp (53%). This result corroborates the services' claim that older women do not want permanent work and do not want to work full-time, with the caveat that it is married older women who do not want to work full-time or permanently. These women want time to visit family members, care for elderly parents and

relatives, volunteer in their communities, socialize and travel. Being married allows them to work as a temp because they are less in need of steady income, although there is no doubt that the income from temping helps them financially, especially in providing extras. Temporary work provides money for shows, trips and additional things they could not otherwise afford. A few older women mentioned they like having their own money to buy gifts for their husbands.

One-tenth of the sample (and nearly half of the women over 49 years old) were retired. The retired women complained that it is difficult to find work that combines flexibility and the reduced hours they desire; some believe age discrimination accounts for their difficulty. Motivated by the increasing number of older women workers, the temporary help industry is beginning to target retired women to expand its pool of workers. There is at least one temporary help service in Philadelphia that has worked with the Mayor's Commission on Aging to devise a program specifically to recruit retired women to work as temps. The president of Manpower, Inc., the largest temporary help service in the world, notes that older workers are not yet a significant part of the temporary workforce, but he expects they will dominate the industry as the baby-boom generation ages (Edmonson 1987).

### **Skill Development and Work Experience**

Very few women work as temporaries because they think they need to improve their job skills. Only four percent of the sample used temporary work as a way to gain entree into the labor force. The majority of this group fit the common perception of reentry workers; they are in their forties and have been out of the workforce for a while. Nine percent of the sample identified themselves as reentry workers. Half of these women still have children at home. They were the most likely of any group to say they are in temp work to develop skills (29%) and to get more work experience (14%).

Sixteen percent of the women in the sample never worked in a full-time permanent job. They were all under the age of 25, single and childless. These women did not use temporary work to gain entree into the workforce, nor do they intend to work in clerical jobs in the long run. Rather, temping was a way to earn income while in school (60%) or to earn income while they looked for permanent work in another field.

### **Does Temping Work?**

Does temping provide what the services promise? Are the workers' expectations and needs met? Are the outcomes related in systematic ways for different demographic groups? This section addresses these questions; Tables 5 and 6 contain the relevant data.



### **Temps Who Want Full-Time Work**

Consistent with their need for income equivalent to a full-time job, the majority of participants (57%) wanted to work full-time while temping. This is related to the various demographic groups in consistent ways: most black women, young women and single women, regardless of presence of children or level of education, wanted to work full-time.

Not everyone who wanted to work full-time, however, received enough assignments to attain that goal; the proportion of temp workers who did ranges from a low of one-third of women who are forty or older to a high of 85 percent of black women. Less than half the women over 39 years old, women with low computer skills and women with low education had as many assignments as they wanted. In contrast, two-thirds of women with at least some college experience, and three-fourths of young women and women with high computer skills received enough assignments to keep them working close to full-time. Age has an independent, negative effect, even within levels of education or computer skill.

Many women experienced involuntary periods of time without assignments, ranging from a week to months. Some women suggested that the economy was responsible for a decrease in the number of temp assignments available.

Temporary service representatives claimed that temps with word processing and high level computer skills can be on assignment within hours of registering with a service and that

they guarantee these temps will be working as much as they want. And it is true that the women in the sample with high level computer skills were most likely to be working full-time. However, 42 percent of women with medium level skills and a quarter of women with high level skills did not receive as many assignments as they wanted.

Some women accepted lower-skilled assignments, as a receptionist rather than a secretary, for example (with lower rates than their usual pay), rather than forgo income. This contradicts the managers' claims that there are always more high level positions than they can fill and always more low level clerks than assignments appropriate to their abilities.<sup>10</sup> In a later section, I will address the issue of the match between workers' skills and the skill requirements of assignments. I mention the mismatch here to make the point that temp work doesn't always deliver what it promises.

There are also mismatches between preferred and actual schedules. Most temporary assignments conform to regular business hours: They are full-day and full-week. Most assignments last a few weeks, some last for months, and it is not unusual for an assignment to turn into an indefinite one. Very few assignments last just a few days or a few days a week over a longer period. And few assignments are shorter than seven hours a day. As I'll relate in the next section, the lack of short term and part-time assignments is a problem for women who want to temp on a part-time schedule. Yet, some of the women who wanted

full-time work accepted part-time assignments. Sometimes they did so because something in their lives precluded working full-time hours. However, some women accepted part-time when they were desperate for any work. According to the 1985 CPS data, half of the temps who worked fewer than 35 hours a week did so involuntarily, because of slack work (Lapidus 1990).

#### Temping as a Route to Permanent Work

Two-thirds of the women were offered a permanent position as a result of a temporary assignment, 40 percent more than once. However, only 19 percent actually accepted a temp-to-perm position at some point during their time temping. Those who declined either did not want a permanent job at that time, did not like the pay or did not like the company. Women with good computer skills were most likely to be offered permanent jobs (80% at least once, over half more than once). Ironically, the women with high level computer skills are also least likely to be interested in working permanently in a clerical or secretarial job. Temporary services tout this benefit of temping, but they confided that temp-to-perm doesn't actually happen that often. So it was surprising that such a high percentage of the women in the sample had been offered a permanent position.<sup>11</sup>

Women who temp as a way to earn income while they're looking for permanent jobs (as opposed to those who hope a permanent position will develop from a temporary one) need time to

interview with prospective employers. Flexibility during an assignment is not always easy to arrange, however.

### Forms of Flexibility

One of the goals of this study was to examine critically the types of flexibility available from temping. Temporary services advertise that temps can work as little or as much as they want. As part of the employment interview and registration process, temps are asked about their schedule and task preferences. The services imply that workers also can choose the kinds of businesses at which they work, and even the rates they earn. In fact, the services pronounce that temps "have all the control in the world."

### Alternative Schedules

A substantial proportion of the women (43%) wanted to work something other than full-time. Women who wanted to work less than full-day or full-week in temporary assignments tended to be disappointed because few assignments deviate from the standard work week. In her analysis of the 1985 CPS data, Lapidus (1990) found that almost three-fourths of temporary workers usually worked 35 hours a week and over two-thirds of temporary workers usually work 8 or more hours a day. The industry's standard minimum length for an assignment is four hours, but few assignments are that short. At the other extreme, some temps

spend years in the same assignment. More typically, however, assignments continue for a week to a few months.

Over three-fourths of the respondents' most recent temporary assignments lasted at least one week: 22 percent were less than a week, 22 percent were one-to-two weeks, 18 percent were two-to-four weeks, 16 percent were one-to-three months, eight percent were three-to-six months, eight percent were more than six months and six percent were ongoing at the time of the survey. In over ninety percent of the assignments, the temps worked at least seven hours a day (50% were at least 8 hours a day).

One third of the sample, but half of women in their fifties and sixties, had restrictions or preferences on their availability for temporary assignments. Women whose regular occupation is nonclerical also had a higher than average rate of restrictions (43%), but many of these women were in school. Since they wanted seasonal flexibility, their desired schedule (full-time on and off) was more readily available. Married women wanted alternate schedules at a higher rate than single women (41% compared with 31%), but women with children were not much different from childless women (39% compared with 35%).

The nature of the respondents' restrictions varied. Some women wanted part-time hours; some wanted fewer work days per week; some wanted seasonal work. Most college students who temp do so during semester breaks and summers - not during the school year. Temp work pays better than many other short-term options



(fast-food, etc...), and they do not have to lie to prospective employers about their long-term interest in a job.

Nearly everyone with restrictions on their availability for assignments had their conditions met in all (77%) or some (20%) of their assignments. Half of the older women, however, said only half their assignments fit their desired schedule. They were the group most likely to want part-time hours. But part-time schedules are not readily available; only eight percent of women in the sample worked fewer than 7 hours a day on their most recent assignment.

Of the respondents with restrictions on their availability for temporary work, only 31 percent had their last assignment for less than a week and 38 percent had an assignment that lasted one-to-two weeks. All short-day assignments lasted less than a month (and half of these lasted less than a week).

Most respondents who wanted to work less than full-week or full-day complained that few assignments actually met their desired schedule. Just as women who want to work full-time will accept short week assignments, women who want to work part-time will accept assignments that do not match their desired schedule. In fact, this happens more often for them since there are fewer part-week or part-time assignments.

Some women, though, are able to maneuver the system to expand the bounds of flexibility. Temps with flexible assignments often arranged their schedule directly with the client company. One woman shares a long-term assignment with

another temp; the service was informed of the arrangements after the fact. The two women alternate working two and three days a week from September through June. One summers at the shore and the other works full-time through the summer. During the winter, this arrangement is reversed for a month. When one woman is sick or needs time off, the other works full-time.

There are other examples of temps who devised a flexible schedule directly with a company. Sometimes women who want part-time work accept a full-time position because it is short term. If the assignment gets extended (which happens frequently), the temp may be able to negotiate a part-time schedule with the company.

#### Flexibility Within An Assignment

Flexibility during an assignment is not readily available. Most temps try to avoid taking days off while they are on assignment, unless it is a long term one or an emergency arises. Few women leave an assignment unless conditions are unbearable, or they need to stop work for other reason. In general, flexibility during an assignment increases with long-term assignments, whether they are continuous or intermittent.<sup>12</sup>

I wondered how women who are actively searching for permanent jobs are able to contact prospective employers and schedule interviews while temping full-time. Temps use various strategies that depend, in part, on their relationships with the services and with the client companies. The services require

temps to arrange time off through them, not the clients. In reality, much of the interaction takes place directly between the temp and her immediate supervisor. Services are informed of alternative arrangements after the fact, if at all.

Some respondents do not accept temporary assignments while actively interviewing. Some temps were denied assignments because they were honest about their intention to take a couple of hours off during the assignment. After losing a number of assignments because of her honesty, one woman simply stopped telling the service her plans, accepted assignments, and arranged time off directly with the client companies. In the respondents' experiences, most companies are amenable to a temp taking a few hours off during the day, especially if she makes up the time. In any case, the company does not lose money because they pay by the hour for temporary labor.

#### Picking and Choosing Assignments

Temps turn down assignments for a number of reasons: timing, length of assignment, location of the assignment, the duties, the company, the pay rate. Two-thirds of the respondents turned down an assignment at least once. (It is most common to have done so only once or a few times; just 12 percent of the women turned down many assignments.) Black women and city women were much less likely than their counterparts to turn down assignments; half of the black women and city women declined assignments a few times or many times compared with three-quarters of white and

suburban women. In fact, no black respondent reported doing so more than a few times. Young women were also less likely to turn them down (53% versus 94% of women in their forties and 78% of women in their fifties and sixties). Single women (57%), too, were less likely than married women (78%) to turn down assignments. These groups temp for different reasons. Most black women, city women and single women need full-time wages because they are the sole wage-earners in their households. Presumably, therefore, they cannot be as choosy in accepting assignments. Similarly, these women have fewer restrictions on their time and are more likely to want to work full-time at temporary assignments. Women in their forties are an exception; 60 percent want to temp full-time (the same as their younger counterparts), but 94 percent declined assignments at least a few times.

Women registered with more than one service are more likely to turn down assignments (72% compared with 57%). Presumably, it is easier to turn something down, even if you need income, if there is a reasonable chance of being offered another assignment. Even if one service is punitive, the others might offer assignments.

Groups with higher rates of turning down assignments have been registered with their current services on average a year longer than women with lower refusal rates. Women become more selective about assignments (and proffered rates) the longer they temp.

However, over half the women have, at least once, accepted assignments they did not want. The temporary service representatives sometimes personalize their requests - "Please do this for me" - and often the temps accept because it is prudent to develop a good relationship with their service representative, who, after all, allocates assignments. Some women complained that when they accepted a less-than-ideal assignment - either because it was the only one available or "as a favor" - they were not transferred when a better one became available. There is also some frustration that when they accepted a lower level assignment, they were not compensated at their usual rate. A college degree and good computer skills seem to protect women from having to accept undesirable assignments.

The respondents varied in their experiences and perceptions of the repercussions for declining assignments. Some women turned down many assignments without any untoward consequences; they never lacked assignments when they wanted them. Other women, however, believe that the services penalized them by waiting to offer another assignment. Or the temp believed she had to be more aggressive in requesting assignments because the service did not call back after a rejection. Similarly, some women left assignments they did not like and received new assignments quickly while others think the services were uncooperative in finding them something else.

Managers and owners of the temporary services maintain there are no repercussions for refusing or leaving an assignment. They



varied, however, in their policies - or perhaps only in their openness - about temporary employees' rights. Some admitted that they are not likely to continue to offer assignments to someone who has turned down many.

The threat of withholding assignments is mitigated by competition among temporary services for skilled temps. Some services said they need all the temps they can get, so they rarely rebuff someone who declines an assignment. This is truer for small services than for the large well-known services.

#### Women With Children

Temporary work does not provide women with young children the optimum form of flexibility. The few women in this sample who have small children were constrained at times in accepting temporary assignments because they could not arrange day-care on short notice. Women who rely on family and friends are restricted to their availability. Day-care centers generally require full-time or regular part-time, not intermittent, attendance.

The form of flexibility available from temp work - time off between assignments but full-time work when on - does not correspond to the way women with families need time off. This is not true as a blanket statement, of course. Women who want to restrict their availability for work to weeks when children are in school are more likely to get assignments that accommodate

their needs than are women who restrict their availability to their children's daily school schedules.

One woman has been registered with five services for over a year, but only had a few assignments because she wants to work part-time. She was surprised and disappointed by the lack of assignments that accommodate her needs - especially because the services advertise themselves as perfect for women who need flexible schedules to accommodate their family responsibilities.

### **Skills Requirements and Skill Acquisition**

This section describes the types of assignments temps perform, the tasks involved and the match between the required skills and the skills of the temporary workers, with particular attention to their computer skills. Data in this section are based on the respondents' most recent temporary assignments, but are supplemented by the qualitative interviews. Training opportunities available from temping are also considered. Tables 7, 8 and 9 relate to these issues.

#### **What Do Temps Do?**

Temporary clerical and secretarial workers do everything from near-menial to executive secretarial tasks. The lowest skill required for any of the assignments reported was "leaflet dispersal," for which the respondent was "ridiculously overqualified." Sometimes managers give temps work no one else wants to do: One woman was appalled that she was asked to count

the contents of bottles of pills, although she was hired as a secretary.

At the other extreme, depending on the skills of the temp, the duration of the assignment, and the needs and inclination of the client, some temporary workers have a great deal of responsibility. One woman has an indefinite assignment as the backup executive secretary to a vice-president in a large pharmaceutical company. She literally is in charge of the office at times and has duties beyond those that are typically expected of someone in a temporary position.

But most of the time, temps do routine office work that requires skills that are transferable to different settings. Answering phones (55%), typing (24%), receptionist duties (23%) and filing (23%) are the tasks most frequently performed by temporary clerical workers. Word processing is used in a large percentage of assignments too, and is one of the principal tasks for one-third of the assignments reported in the study.

The tasks correspond in part to the titles of the assignments. One-third of the respondents were secretaries with word processing duties, one-fourth were receptionists and 15 percent were clerks.

#### Do Temps and Assignments Match?

Temporary workers complained more about being under-worked than being over-worked, although this varied tremendously by client. In some assignments, the temp basically just occupied a

chair. Permanent staff in the client companies sometimes assumed that temps could not perform tasks of any consequence, and so dismissed them as "just a temp." It may also be difficult to integrate someone new into an office for just a short period, and some work depends upon comprehension that can only come from experience within a specific setting.

Most women in the sample preferred busy assignments over boring ones, although they complained that some clients over-work temps. The actual nature of an assignment can vary dramatically from the description given to the temp. Or an assignment can evolve into more responsibility than initially conceived. Some women received rate increases to compensate for these circumstances (although always at the temps initiative).

Half of the temps believe they were overqualified for at least some of their assignments, almost half believe their skills were well-matched to the tasks and just a small proportion believe they were under-qualified. These judgments vary by characteristics of the workers, in particular by ethnicity, age, marital status, education and computer skills. Older women (59%), black women (56%), women who are normally clerical workers (55%) and women with no education beyond a high school degree (61%) were most likely to think their skills corresponded to their assignments. Women with bachelor's degrees overwhelmingly (81%) believe they were overqualified for temporary secretarial and clerical work. They were doing secretarial work because it is the only non-specialized (i.e. not health care-related or

professional) temp work available.<sup>13</sup> Educated women possess the computer skills that allow them perform these assignments, even if they do not have training or experience in secretarial or clerical work - as indeed is the case for most of them. Only 28 percent of women with at least a bachelor's degree worked in an administrative support position before temping. It is the schedule and income they're after, not the work per se.

Temporary services purport to match successfully the skills of the temporary worker and the requirements of the client company. In particular, they claim to provide temps who are already trained in the specific hardware and software the companies use. The larger temporary services have developed hardware and software that measure applicants' proficiency levels for a variety of word processing and other software packages. They advertise this feature in marketing their services to companies.

Temporary workers are less sanguine about the perfect fit between their skills and the needs of the client. As noted previously, many temps believe they were over-qualified for at least some of their assignments. On the other hand, companies may increase the responsibilities of a temp once they recognize her competence. Many of the computer literate respondents worked on assignments where other temps in the office had no computer experience or were not conversant with the specific software. Even assuming a service is scrupulous about matching skills, assignments frequently are miscommunicated. Temps arrive at



assignments to find the equipment, or the program or the tasks differ from what she had been told by the service. Assignments can also be more involved than the companies conveyed to the services.

### Computer Skills

Nearly every woman in the sample has some computer skills;<sup>16</sup> only 10 percent have never worked with computers. These women are much older and are less educated than the sample as a whole. In general, computer skills are inversely related to age and education. Out of a possible 10 computer skills, women in their fifties and sixties have an average of three skills, compared to five skills for women in their forties and six skills for women under forty. Similarly, women with no more than a high school education average only three skills compared to five for women with some college and six for women with at least a college degree. Within levels of education, age has an independent negative effect on possessing computer skills. Also, older women are more likely to have performed data entry or dedicated word processing, and younger women are more likely to know personal computer word processing, including advanced functions, as well as data-base management, and computer graphics.

Most every woman has data entry (62%), dedicated word processing (72%) and personal computer word processing (74%) experience. It is less common to be conversant in advanced word processing functions, spreadsheet and data-base programs or to

have a working knowledge of a computer operating system. The respondents worker with computer four years, on average.

#### Training Provided by Temporary Help Services

To attract employees and clients, and to improve the quality of temps, temporary services have been developing in-house training programs and advertising them widely. As with testing capabilities, the presence of on-site training is strongly related to size of temporary services. Branches of the large national and international services are more likely to offer training than franchise branches (some of which have training systems available from their corporate headquarters, for a fee) or smaller independently-owned services (which are least likely of the services to offer training).

The proportion of temporary services in the Philadelphia PMSA that offer job training is similar to the national proportion (53% and 55%, respectively) (U.S. Department of Labor 1988a).

Nearly every suburban respondent (93%) but only two-thirds of city respondents were registered with at least one service that provides training. (This difference may be an artifact of the way the sample was drawn; the temporary service in common with most of the respondents offers training.)<sup>15</sup> Six percent of the respondents do not know if their services offer training, and a few women know that something is available but they are not familiar with the specific features. Being registered with more

than one temporary service increases the prospect of having access to training. Cross-training in computer skills is the most common type of training available; three-fifths of the sample had access to such training. Two-fifths worked for services that offer training in basic computer skills and typing, respectively. Suburban respondents were more likely to have access to training within any of these categories. Some 'training' is limited to hand-outs about grammar, personal appearance and demeanor, office procedures and so forth.

Although not common, some temporary services pay a portion of fees for courses taken elsewhere, at a business school or community college, for example. One-fifth of the suburban temps but just three percent of the city temps were registered with at least one service that offers this benefit. The temporary service in common with most of the suburban women does not, which is further evidence that suburban services - or suburban branches - offer greater access to training.

Most training programs consist of self-directed tutorials in various software packages. The temp works alone, at her own pace, for between one hour to 12 hours (or sometimes longer). The major computer programs used by businesses are typically available: dedicated word processing and personal computer word processing, data-bases, spreadsheet and, in some cases, electronic mail applications. Some services with computer tutorials provide software-specific manuals and keyboard

templates for temps to bring to their assignments as well as on-the-job telephone assistance.

Some training programs are not appropriate for novices; rather, they are designed to cross-train someone with skills in one area to use a different software package within the same genre. For example, someone with word processing experience can learn a different word processing program. However, some services purport that their training programs can teach computer skills to someone with no previous experience.

Few services impose restrictions on eligibility for training programs. However, a few temps worked for services that tried to impose a length of service guarantee in exchange for training. (The temps were asked to sign a document stipulating their obligation to the service.) Although the managers acknowledge they have no authority to enforce such conditions, some admit they still ask their temporary employees to sign such a document. Some services restrict training opportunities to temps who receive good reports from clients.

Training at the temporary services is nearly always free. Sometimes, though, a service will contract for special training that includes an actual trainer rather than just a tutorial. Temporary services are more likely to charge temps for this type of training. Two respondents were charged quite a lot of money for a computer course taken at the suggestion of, and through, a service. One woman later discovered that other temps had not been charged for the same course. A few women were offered

training for a fee, so declined to participate. At the opposite extreme, some women received training along with the client's permanent employees while on assignment - and received their regular rates for the time spent in training. This opportunity, however, does not seem to be widespread.

About a third of the women in the sample were encouraged by their services to obtain additional training. This occurred more frequently in the suburban services; women with children, women in their forties, married women, and women with fewer computer skills were more likely than their counterparts to be encouraged to pursue additional training.

Over two-thirds of the sample who already have some computer skills think they need additional computer training. Similarly, 60 percent of the women with no computer experience think they need to learn computer skills. An equal proportion of women (two-fifths) want to learn any given skill: word processing, data-base management, spreadsheet, programming and operating systems. Over a fourth of the temps would like training in something other than computer skills, for example, in operating other office equipment, interpersonal skills or business courses.

Only one-quarter of the women in the sample, but 44 percent of women in their forties, took advantage of training offered by a service. (Only one of the women in their forties who had some training is a reentry woman, too; so that does not explain the higher representation of women in their forties among the temps who completed some training).



The interviews and comments on the surveys afford insight in why so many women would say they need or want training but so few actually availed themselves of the opportunities offered by the services. Many of the women downplayed the type of training offered by the services. This attitude was also common among the industry representatives; owners and managers of some services disparaged the training offered by others. They claim most training is minimal and that the tutorial format is only useful for people who are already skilled. Women with extensive computer experience claim they can learn most systems while on assignment. Respondents contended that training is only useful if you use the skills immediately; otherwise, you lose them. In fact, respondents who completed training programs did so to prepare for specific assignments.

#### On-The-Job Training

Although few women use the temp services for formal training, nearly every respondent interviewed believes she has learned from her temping experiences.<sup>16</sup> It was not unusual for a temp to arrive at an assignment without the exact computer skills needed. In some instances the service knows the temp is not experienced in a specific package or with specific hardware and will ask her to complete a tutorial first. Sometimes this is handled simply by the temp bringing documentation with her to the assignment. Some temps - especially those who are confident of their ability to learn things quickly - adroitly sidestep the

issue of their specific skills so they can get good assignments. They then learn the package or system while on assignment<sup>17</sup>.

The respondents find that time and opportunities for skill development are built into many assignments. Often, other workers on the job willingly help and manuals are usually available. Most of the learning under these conditions is directly related to the requirements of the assignment. On some assignments, though, temps use their free time to take advantage of equipment and programs that are available but not needed for the assignment.

Besides acquiring technical skills while working in temporary assignments, some temps believe they gained "people skills," greater self confidence, and useful knowledge about the operations of different businesses.

Some respondents do not think they learned anything from temping. Women who do not have computer skills are less likely to receive assignments where training could occur. Some of the older respondents, in particular, were disappointed by the lack of assignments available because of their lower skills and by the lack of effective training available to them. There are a few respondents, however, who learned all their computer skills while temping.

#### **Employment Relations**

This section considers the nature of the employment relationship between temporary workers and the services that

employ them. It also reports the wage rates and benefits received by the women in the sample. See Tables 7, 8, 10 and 11 for the related data.

### The Employment Relationship

As the legal employers of the temps, temporary services must comply with regulations that govern employment relationships; they pay social security, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and other employment-related taxes.

The formal employment ties between the temps and their services are obscured because the actual site of the job and the day-to-day supervision of temps occur at the client companies. Yet, the services retain authority over the temps; they require that temps make all arrangements for days off or lateness or relay questions about their assignments through their service representatives rather than deal directly with the client companies. The temp talks to her service representative, who talks to the client's personnel office, who talks to the department manager, who may or may not be the temp's immediate supervisor. Temps complain that this circuitous route of information, responsibility and authority engenders confusion and miscommunication. As reported already, this route frequently is bypassed. Often temps arrange time off directly with their supervisor. Some temps developed long-term relationships with clients that extend to arranging their own assignments within the

client companies and simply reporting the new assignments to the temporary services.

According to most temps, temporary services differ - sometimes dramatically - in the types of assignments available, their pay rates, their treatment of temps, the availability of training, the type of benefits they offer and how much they "play games." Most of the suburban respondents remarked that the service they share is among the better services regarding their treatment of temps.

Many respondents - even those who love temping and feel they have a good relationship with their temporary services - believe they must always be alert, aggressive and savvy in their exchanges because temporary services try "to get away with things." For example, the services offer lower rates, forget to mention the rate which implies it will equal the temp's last rate, only confer vacation pay or holiday pay if the temp explicitly requests it at the appropriate time, hold pay checks, consistently underpay, send temps to "difficult" places. They believe that temporary services pursue their business interests to the detriment of unassertive women - and that young women and older women are especially vulnerable.

The owners and managers also insinuated that other services are not forthright, that they misrepresent the amount of work, the type of work, the rates, the type and extent of flexibility, training opportunities and benefits available. On the other hand, the services also claim that some temps "get what they can

from you"; they use the service to receive training and then leave, or they apply for unemployment compensation when not legitimately eligible.

Many respondents commented that the services call them for work assignments that don't match at all the conditions they specified when they registered with the service (e.g., specific types of work, hours, or locations), try to get them to leave assignments from other services, continue to call them even after they've left temporary work, or do not realize they are already on an assignment for that very service. Temps become frustrated with this behavior because it suggests the services are disorganized and are not attentive to temps' preferences - or even their very presence.

#### Remuneration

The women in the sample earned between \$5.00 and \$12.50 per hour temping; one-third received \$7.00 or less, one-third received between \$7.25 and \$9.00, and one-third received between \$9.25 and \$12.50 per hour. The average rate for the sample was \$8.32 (the median was \$8.00, so the mean is only slightly skewed to the high end of the pay scale).

More than anything else, the rates correlate with the level of tasks required for an assignment and the level of computer skills possessed by the temp. Assignments filled by 'word processing secretaries' were compensated at the highest rates - on average, \$10.18 per hour. Assignments that entailed word



processing as one of the three major tasks performed paid an average hourly rate of \$9.88.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, assignments for which data entry and filing were among the three major tasks were compensated, on average, at \$7.35 and \$7.53, respectively. Temps on assignments as clerks received \$6.79 per hour; temps in receptionist positions received \$7.14.<sup>19</sup>

Women with high level computer skills received an average hourly rate of \$8.94; for women with no or low-level computer skills, the average was \$7.05. Retired women (\$7.40), women with no education beyond high school (\$7.43) and reentry women (\$7.56) were compensated at lower than average rates. These are, of course, the women who tend to have few computer skills.

Many of the temps (and some of the temporary services' representatives) believe that rates in the suburbs are generally higher than rates for comparable assignments in the city. Although the distribution of computer skills is similar for city and suburban women, city temps earned, on average, 85 cents less per hour. Some managers said they must pay higher rates in the suburbs because their "suburban ladies"<sup>20</sup> are less in need of work and, therefore, pickier. They do not want to travel very far, either.<sup>21</sup> Since the city sample is largely comprised of black women, it is plausible that racial discrimination accounts for the lower city rates. However, the evidence from this study suggests that the rate discrepancy derives from location more than overt discrimination. The difference between rates for black and white women (on average 52 cents and not statistically

significant) is smaller than the difference between city and suburban respondents (on average 85 cents, which is statistically significant at the .05 level). Rates also differ significantly for suburban and city temps with the same job title. Secretaries with word processing duties earned an average rate of \$9.00 in the city and \$10.20 in the suburbs; the respective average rates for receptionists were \$6.92 and \$7.58.

Although there seem to be "going rates" for specific job categories (e.g., receptionist, word processor), the actual rates are individually negotiated. Women registered with the same service, doing the same assignment can be working for different rates. Experienced temps have learned to negotiate a good rate early in their association with a service because they get locked into the early rate. Long-term temps believe that the services, as their employers, should establish regular review and rate-increase procedures. They hate to ask for raises, although many have asked and some have received.

None of the women in this study earned the high-end rates (\$15 or more) advertised by temporary services and quoted by the owners and managers, even though they appear to be in the kinds of assignments that get compensated at the highest rates. Some women are aware of this discrepancy and believe it is one of the ways temporary services misrepresent their work conditions.

Students in the sample found that temporary work pays better and was more accessible than most other part-time or part-year work. Some women claim that they earned more from temporary work

than they could from most permanent jobs. Other women, though, earn less money temping than in previous jobs. Older women, in particular, and women who normally work in higher level occupations undergo a decrease in wages when they temp.

According to the 1987 BLS Wage Survey of the THS industry, pay rates for temporary workers were substantially lower than those of full-time permanent workers in other industries in the same geographical areas, although this varied by occupation and area. Temporary secretaries typically earned only 60 to 80 percent as much as their full-time, permanent counterparts. Word processors, however, averaged at least 90 percent of permanent employee rates and were paid higher average rates than permanent employees in one-third of the areas compared. Temporary receptionists and data-entry keyers earned less than permanent employees in analogous positions in nearly every area (U.S. Department of Labor 1988a).

These general relationships between temporary employee pay rates and full-time employee pay rates are replicated in this study, based on a comparison between the data from this survey (the rates were earned between November 1990 and April 1991) with data from the November 1990 Area Wage Survey for the Philadelphia PMSA (U.S. Department of Labor 1991).<sup>22</sup> Temporary word processors earned on average 104% of wages earned by permanent employees in word processing positions. In the other categories, temporary employees earned less, on average, than permanent employees in the area: secretaries (80%), receptionists (85%) and

data entry keyers (91%). Since permanent employees often receive medical insurance, life insurance and other benefits, which can increase wage bills substantially, even the higher hourly rate for word processor temps does not reflect a higher rate of compensation. Moreover, temps only receive wages for actual hours worked (except for the few who receive vacation pay), so sick days and slack work result in reduction of income (as a result of forgone wages).

### Benefits

Competition among temporary services for qualified employees has induced some services to offer improved benefits to their temporary workers, including group rates on health insurance, vacation and holiday pay, training programs, and in a few cases, pension plans and co-paid health insurance. Some temporary service managers contend that most benefits signify public relations and recruitment tactics more than meaningful recompense because few temporary workers meet eligibility requirements. At the same time, nearly every owner or manager interviewed boasted that he or she offered the best - and most legitimate - benefit plan available to temps. Benefits offered to temporary employees vary widely. As with training opportunities, the larger services are more likely to offer more benefits.

While the services advertise benefit plans to recruit workers, they intend them primarily to retain long-term employees. Eligibility for most benefits hinges on minimum

service requirements to initiate coverage and ongoing requirements to maintain coverage.

One fourth of temps, nationally, but only 3 percent of them in the Philadelphia PMSA, were registered with temporary services that have co-paid health insurance plans (US Department of Labor 1988b). Qualifications for health insurance typically include accruing a prescribed number of hours with a service and maintaining a minimum number of hours each month thereafter to remain eligible. Only 10 percent of the sample were registered with a service that offered co-paid insurance; no one participated in any such plan.

More commonly, temporary services inform their employees about group-rates for a health insurance plan and life insurance available through The National Association of Temporary Services (NATS), the industry's trade association.<sup>23</sup> While 29 percent of the respondents had group rates for health insurance available to them through a temporary service, only one woman actually purchased a plan. Some women were reluctant to be insured by an unfamiliar company. Respondents who investigated the plan discovered that the group rates actually cost more than individual coverage under other plans. Many temps, especially single-income temps, cannot afford health insurance, even at group rates.

Nationally, three-quarters of temps work for services that extend a vacation plan (Williams 1989). Most plans confer one week extra pay for between 1200 and 1500 work hours; for most



services, the time must be accrued in a twelve month period (some require it to be within a calendar year), for others, time can be carried beyond a year. Thus, a temp has to work over eight months for seven hours a day within a year period with one service (or over ten months to satisfy the 1500 hour criterion) to be eligible for one week of vacation pay. Formulas for determining the rate of pay vary; some services pay the temp's most recent rate, some services average rates earned by the temp over the eligibility period.

Because eligibility requirements are stringent, few temps qualify for vacation pay. Only 12 percent of the temps in this sample received vacation pay from a temporary service, although as a group they were continuously registered with at least one service, on average, for over two years. In many cases, temps must keep track of their hours and explicitly request vacation pay once they are eligible. One woman was disgusted to learn that she was no longer eligible for vacation pay because the service raised the eligibility requirement from 1200 to 1500 hours.<sup>24</sup>

Holiday pay is relatively new. Twenty-eight percent of the temps in this sample were registered with services that offer some holiday pay, but only 12 percent received this benefit.<sup>25</sup> Roughly two-fifths of temps across the nation and one-third of them in the Philadelphia area work for temporary services that offer temps some holiday pay, most commonly: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor

Day (Williams 1989). As with other benefits, eligibility for holiday pay is restricted (in some cases the temp must work 1200 hours during the 12 months preceding the holiday and must work the business days immediately preceding and following the holiday, if the client company is open).

Many temporary services offer referral bonuses as an incentive for recruiting other temps, contingent upon the skills of the referred person and the amount of time she works for the service. The managers would not quote values, but the amount is usually related to the category of the worker (referring a skilled word processor, for example, would result in a higher bonus than referring a receptionist) and some categories may be excluded (clerks, for example). Bonuses can be modest, as little as \$15, for example. Three-fifths of all temps nationally and in the Philadelphia area, and two-fifths of the sample have access to referral bonuses. Only nine percent of the women, though, ever received a referral bonus.

Some benefits are idiosyncratic. One service instituted a "Preferred Employee Plan" through which eligible temps receive 15 percent discounts from participating health-care providers. In another service, temps can purchase company stock at a 15 percent discount after they work 400 hours. Larger firms may offer 401K retirement plans through their corporate headquarters.

An owner of a local temporary service with two branches described his research and experimentation efforts to achieve a bona fide benefit package in contrast to what he judged to be the

"phantom benefits" touted by other temporary services. In addition to holiday pay (contingent upon eligibility requirements similar to those described earlier), his temporary workers earn four hours extra pay at their most recent rate for each month they work 132 hours (33 hours/week in a four-week month) or 165 hours in a five-week month.

In its national survey of temporary services, the ELS was able to determine the proportion of services that provide specific benefits, but not the proportion of temps who met the eligibility requirements or the proportion of temps who actually received the benefits (Williams 1989). For this study, temporary services representatives described the specific benefits their firms offered, but they could not (or would not) disclose the proportion of their temporary workers who received benefits. Some managers acknowledged that only a small portion of their temporary staff received any given benefit, primarily because most temps do not accrue the requisite hours.

And, indeed, few of the respondents received any benefits from a temporary service. In comments on the questionnaire and in interviews, however, the issue of benefits was quite important to many of the respondents. Some of the temps claim their services never informed them about available benefits. And it is true that some temps seemed genuinely unaware of benefits even though they were registered with services that offer benefits. (Remember, two-thirds of the women in the sample were registered with the same service, which does have benefits.)

In many services, temps must request benefits when they satisfy eligibility requirements. This procedure undoubtedly results in some women not receiving benefits to which they are entitled, although this need not be the intended outcome.

Long-term temps, especially, resent the lack of benefits associated with temping. As they observe, temporary services expect temps to behave as loyal employees (and most temps believe they do), but then disregard their side of the relationship by not providing decent benefits.

Temporary work resulted in a reduced compensation package for most women in the sample who had permanent full-time work experience. Three-fourths of the women had employer-provided medical insurance and 61 percent had dental insurance in their last permanent job. An additional 9 percent had co-paid insurance and 10 percent had group rates available. Nearly everyone had vacation pay (91%), sick leave (86%), disability insurance (71%) and pension benefits (64%). Half of the permanent jobs offered tuition benefits and 12 percent offered dependent care benefits.

Sixty-two percent of the women have access to some benefits apart from temporary work. One-fourth of the sample are covered through their spouses, 14 percent are insured through their parents, 10 percent pay for medical insurance through their previous permanent job and 12 percent have some other source of benefits (social security, pensions, unemployment insurance, public assistance).

While few women have medical insurance through a temporary service, one-third have medical insurance, one-fourth have dental insurance and 15 percent have co-paid medical plans. Most of these women are covered by their spouses' benefit plans and a few pay for their own coverage. Married women (45%) are much more likely than single women (19%) and white women (39%) are much more likely than black women (12%) to have health insurance. The differential coverage for black and white women is not entirely explained by their differences in marital status. It is true that married women are twice as likely as single women to have medical insurance, regardless of ethnicity. However, two-thirds of married white women have medical insurance compared with just half of married black women. And half of married white women have employer provided medical insurance (rather than a co-paid plan) compared with one-quarter of married black women. (The number of married black women in the sample is small, so these results are not conclusive.)

Two-thirds of the respondents have no medical insurance. They pay medical expenses out-of-pocket and hope no serious illness or accident occurs.

#### **Temporary Work in Relation to Labor Force Experience**

For most women, temporary work represents a relatively brief hiatus from permanent, full-time work. Only a small proportion of women working for temporary services regard themselves as 'career temps.'<sup>26</sup> This section considers the issues of the



temporary workers' labor force characteristics and experience and the type of occupational mobility - if any - temporary work signifies for them. Tables 12 through 15 contain the relevant data.

### Labor Force Experience

Overall, the women in the sample have strong labor force characteristics. Most of their work has been in full-time permanent positions (an average of nine years, ranging from zero to forty-four years). Half of them worked full-time and permanently for at least five years; 20 percent have some experience, but less than four years and 16 percent have no full-time, permanent labor force experience. The average number of years spent in full-time, permanent work does not differ greatly for any control group in ways that are not related to age; age, of course, is strongly correlated with most time-related data in the survey.

The women in the sample with no full-time permanent labor force experience were all younger than age 26, single, and either attending or recently graduated from college. They used temporary work as a way to earn relatively good wages on an intermittent basis while in school or while on the job market, not for entree into the labor force.

Fewer women, although still the majority (64%), have worked part-time. The group average for part-time work is just two years, although it ranges from one month to twelve years; only

one-fifth have worked part-time for more than four years. None of the control groups differ significantly in the amount of time spent in part-time work, except women in their forties average three years (the highest mean for any of the demographic groups).

The women in the sample have worked for a temporary service from one month to twelve years; they have temped, on average, for two and three-fourths years, over their lifetimes. Thirty percent temped for at least four years over their lifetimes, but not necessarily continuously. One-fifth of the women in the sample have been continuously registered with at least one temporary service for over four years; and one-fifth of the women have been registered with a service for six months or less. Everyone else has temped between two and three years, on average. The average length of their latest time registered with a temporary services is two and one-third years.<sup>27</sup>

Age accounts for the largest differences in the time women spent in temporary work; women in their forties, regardless of marital status, have the highest average (five years) length of temporary work throughout their lifetimes.<sup>28</sup> Married women under fifty have temped longer than single women in comparable age groups, but there is no difference in length of time temping between married and single women in their fifties and sixties. The average time spent in temporary work does not differ by presence or absence of children.

It has been just over three years, on average, since the women last worked in permanent jobs.<sup>29</sup> This figure ranges from

two months to 34 years, but half the respondents have been away from full-time, permanent work for only two years or less. Women in their fifties and sixties have been away from full-time permanent work, on average, over seven years (remember some of these women are retired from and some are reentering the labor force); the average for women under forty is one and a half years.

Almost two-thirds of the women have spent some time out of paid labor since they first began working,<sup>30</sup> ranging from zero to 23 years and averaging three years and four months. White women (65%) are slightly more likely than black women (59%) to have taken some time off, but they averaged two years longer out of the labor force than black women. More married women (72%) and women with children (79%) spent time out of the labor force than their counterparts (56% of single women and 60% of women with no children). Women with children average one and a half years out over women without children; this relatively small difference may be because older women in the sample have grown children.<sup>31</sup> Women under forty average only a one year absence from the labor force (this also represents a marital status effect, since most of these women are single). Nearly every woman in their forties has spent some time off from paid labor, with an average of six and three quarter years. Women who are fifty and older took an average of eight-and-a-half years time off from paid labor. Almost all of the sample's time out of the workforce was spent caring for children.

## Temporary Work and Occupational Mobility

To the extent that it represents occupational mobility at all, temporary work for the most part acts as an institution for lateral mobility, although it means transient downward mobility for some women and presents some opportunities for upward mobility for a relatively limited number of people.

Two-thirds of the respondents consider their main occupation to be secretarial, clerical or some other administrative-support one.<sup>32</sup> Most of the remaining women consider themselves to be in professional or managerial careers and sixteen percent of the sample gave student as their main occupation (half of the women in school gave this as their main occupation). Less than one-third of women with no full-time labor force experience and one-third of women in school consider themselves to be clerical workers. Most women in school are doing clerical and secretarial work because it is the most readily available work offered by temporary services. All of the women who said their main occupation is professional or managerial are white; they are using temp work as an interim way to earn money or as supplemental work.

Nearly three-quarters of black women are clerical workers compared with less than half of the white respondents. This is a higher proportion than can be accounted for by their age, education or marital status. As noted earlier, the black women in the sample are younger, on average, and more likely to be single than the white women, and most have some education beyond

college (although their education is more likely to be business school, 29 percent compared with 5 percent of white women). Yet, single women are less likely than married women to be clerical workers and less than half of women under forty consider themselves to be clerical workers.

Two-thirds of the women were in administrative support positions at their last permanent job, 9 percent worked in managerial or professional occupations, 12 percent worked in other occupations and 16 percent have no permanent work experience.

The large majority (84%) of women who consider their main occupation to be clerical or secretarial last worked in analogous jobs, although the specific tasks and responsibilities are higher level in some temporary assignments and lower level in others. Three-fourths of the women who had used computers in their last permanent clerical job also used them in their last temporary assignment; the rest were doing lower level work in their temporary assignments (receptionist or clerk or secretary with no word processing responsibilities).

Fewer respondents consider themselves to be clerical or secretarial workers than for whom their last permanent position was a clerical or secretarial job; 85 percent of the women with some college or business school experience were last in a permanent clerical job, but only 58 percent consider themselves to be clerical workers. This difference is explained by the women who worked in clerical positions but are in transition to a



different occupation. To the extent they are experiencing upward mobility, temping is an avenue to that end, not the reason, per se, for the upward mobility.

In fact, only a very few women undergo upward mobility directly as a result of their temporary work experience. One woman had five years full-time experience as a stock clerk before she began working in temporary clerical work. Someone else has temped in light industrial positions and has gradually learned the skills that qualify her for clerical positions. She is training in computers and hopes to find permanent work requiring computer skills.

The few women who experienced downward mobility (excluding the transient group) are retired from higher level permanent jobs; their last position was professional or managerial, but they are now performing clerical duties in their temporary assignments. There are some women who have decided to continue indefinitely in temporary work because they cannot find employment in their preferred field. They loathe temping and secretarial work but regard their choice as a compromise that affords the psychological benefit of not having a long-term commitment to a particular job and the potential for greater flexibility than a permanent position.

The survey instrument was not sensitive enough to discern if the skills some women say they learned through temping - in particular, the computer skills - have resulted in better assignments and, for those who want them, better permanent jobs

than they would otherwise have been able to obtain. The interview data support the conclusion that this, in fact, occurs for some segment of the temporary work force.

Some respondents, especially, but not exclusively black women, consider temporary work an excellent way to gain entree into corporations to which they would not otherwise have access (e.g., Fortune 500 Companies).

### Conclusion

Temporary work is neither as advantageous for women as the temporary help supply industry professes nor as detrimental to them as its critics assert. Both the positive and the negative effects of temporary work are curtailed since most women temp for relatively brief periods. Still, there are valid concerns about increased use of temporary work.

### Summary and Conclusions

Temporary work is not the answer for women, in part because it does not always deliver its stated or implied features and in part because not all women share the same labor market needs and goals. As with all work, temping involves a trade-off between advantages and disadvantages for different segments of the workforce.

The temporary help supply industry emphasizes the utility of temping for women with children. However, this study supports the conclusion reached by other analysts (Golden and Appelbaum

1990; Hartmann and Lapidus 1989; Lapidus 1990), that temporary work is not essentially a life-cycle choice for most temps. Temporary workers are no more likely to be married, to have children or to live in two-earner households than other women in the workforce (Lapidus 1990). Nor does temporary work draw into the workforce women who would not otherwise be employed (Lapidus 1990). Women with children do not spend more time over their lives in temporary work. Temporary work does not seem to offer distinct advantages for women seeking to manage competing work and family demands, especially women with young or school-age children. That temporary work typically is a relatively brief hiatus from permanent work further substantiates this conclusion.

Young women and black women are over-represented among temporary workers, but not because they are more likely to be married or to have children. More younger women are in school, and temping affords students access to intermittent full-time employment. However, like black women, they also have above-average unemployment rates. Thus, young women and black women are over-represented among temporary workers in part because they are more likely than other women to be in-between jobs.

Women in a variety of situations decide to temp: women between jobs, students who would rather not lie about their long term intentions in order to work intermittently, women new to an area or temporarily in an area, women who cannot find work in their field and so choose to temp rather than commit to an undesirable permanent job. Most temps are in-between permanent,

full-time jobs. The most common objective, then, is to use temporary work as a substitute for regular, full-time employment while in a transient situation.

Despite the THS industry claims that it provides labor market entree for some women, and despite popular conceptions that temps are somehow inferior to other workers, temporary workers as a group are neither less experienced nor less skilled than other women workers. Young women do not temp primarily for experience or for entree into the labor market. There are some women who use temporary work as a means to re-enter the workforce, but they are not a major group among the temporary workforce.

For clerical and secretarial workers, temporary work is an alternative within their occupation; some clerical and secretarial workers hope to find permanent work directly as a result of their temporary assignments. For nonclerical workers, temporary work is an alternative to their regular (or anticipated) occupation; they use it as a source of income while looking for permanent work or while in a transient situation.

Some women do temp because of life-cycle issues, but, contrary to common assumptions, these women do not have young children. Married women are more likely than single women to temp as a way to gain flexible work schedules. In particular, older married women are attracted to temporary work by the promise of flexibility.

The temporary help industry exaggerates both the appeal and the actuality of flexibility. It glosses over the meaning of flexibility, how temporary work provides it, and whom it benefits. Furthermore, the industry overstates the proportion of women who register with them primarily to attain flexible work schedules.

To be sure, temporary work provides some flexibility for some women, but it is not as boundless as the industry asserts when they declare that "temps have all the control in the world." To a large extent, a temporary worker's control consists of the right to accept or reject assignments, and even this is constrained by the possibility of not being offered other assignments. Essentially, flexibility means time off between assignments, without pay, sometimes by choice but sometimes because there is not enough work for everyone.

Women who want other forms of flexibility - work schedules that differ from the standard work week or time off within assignments, for example - are much less likely to obtain them from temping. Most temporary assignments conform to regular business hours: They are full-day and full-week. Some women have arranged alternative schedules, but these are less common and require more effort and initiative from the temps than the services imply. Women who want flexibility within assignments will settle for assignments with standard work hours but short-term duration (a few weeks, for instance). This arrangement



provides some measure of flexibility, although not in the preferred form.

Temping best accommodates women for whom flexibility means having the option of working intermittently, but essentially full-time when on. It enables people to move in and out of the workforce as they need or want, but it does not help them to integrate work and other responsibilities on a daily or weekly basis. Women who want to work the weeks their children are in school, for example, have a better chance of getting assignments that coincide with this schedule than women who want their work hours to match their children's daily school schedules. Thus, temporary work fosters limited work and family life complementarity, perhaps most readily for the relatively privileged families in which wives can be supplementary earners because husbands have sufficient incomes and good benefits.

Behind the rhetoric of flexibility touted by the temporary help industry is a very different reality. Managers of the temporary help services admit that the more flexible the worker is - that is, if she is available to work when and where and at the rate the service wants - the more likely she will receive assignments. This inverts the meaning of the flexibility available from temporary work: The temp must accommodate the service's requirements.

For most women, temporary work is inferior to permanent jobs they have held in terms of wages, benefits and job security. Temporary work can pay better, however, than some other options

for short-term, intermittent or part-time work or better hourly rates than some permanent jobs. Students, especially, find that temporary services offer access to better paid jobs than those typically available for the short-term.

More than anything else, the hourly rates earned by temps correlate with level of tasks required for an assignment and level of computer skills possessed by the temp. In general, women with strong labor force characteristics, in particular high levels of education and computer proficiency, do best financially among temps - although their earnings often do not equal those earned in permanent jobs. Not all of these women are in administrative support occupations for the long run. Rather, their skills and education allow them to succeed in jobs for which they may have no direct experience. Despite the potential for higher hourly rates, however, the total compensation package from temping generally is inferior to permanent jobs with medical insurance, sick leave, vacation pay and other benefits.

Older women, women with low education and women with weak computer skills do not receive the better assignments or, consequently, the better rates. These traits tend to coexist. Lower education alone does not account for the position of older temps; their years of work experience compensate for their lower level of education. Rather, lack of computer skills is their primary weakness as temps.

Temporary services proclaim competing goals. On the one hand, they promise to provide employers with skilled labor. On

the other hand, they promote temporary work as a route for women to gain skills and work experience. This contradiction is partly managed by placing relatively high-skilled women in assignments that require relatively low-level skills.

Temporary services also are developing training programs, although relatively few temps seem to be utilizing them. Most training is limited to self-directed cross-training in computer software packages, which makes it less accessible for women with no or few computer skills. Some on-the-job-training also occurs. Unfortunately, the training available from temping is most effective for women who already have well-developed skills. Temping does not readily provide opportunities for skill acquisition and upgrading for women who need extensive re-skilling. Women with weak labor force characteristics, especially older women with no computer skills, were most disappointed by the opportunities for training available from temporary work. Suburban women and women registered with large temporary services seem to have greater access to training.

Temporary work does not really operate as a vehicle for occupational mobility, although it represents transient downward mobility for some women and presents some opportunities for upward mobility for a limited number of people. If anything, it can be conceptualized as an institution for lateral mobility.

Temping provides a route to permanent employment for some women, especially women with good work habits and skills. Ironically, the temps more likely to be offered temp-to-perm

positions tend not to be interested in permanent administrative support positions. They are performing clerical work because it is readily available on a temporary basis.

Temporary work is characterized by ambiguous employment relationships. Many temps dislike the incongruity between their formal employer (the temporary service) and their day-to-day supervisors and co-workers (at the client companies). Temporary workers note that the services fail to uphold their responsibilities as employers, even though the services expect temps to behave as loyal employees. Long-term temps, especially, resent the lack of benefits such as affordable and comprehensive medical insurance, paid holidays and sick leave, vacation pay and regular raises. Lack of guaranteed work, lack of guaranteed rates (and thus income) and lack of recognition are also perceived by temps as breaches of the employment relationship.

The benefits offered by temporary services serve more as a public relations tool than comprehensive protection. Some temporary service employers interpret the low participation rates in their proffered plans as evidence that few temps want or need benefits. Furthermore, the services assume that temps are covered by their husband's medical insurance. Married temps are indeed more likely to have medical insurance. However, many temps are self-supporting single women who have do not have access to other benefits; less than one-half of the women in this sample are medically insured.

The THS industry may be reasoning backwards. It is equally plausible that few women temp for very long because there are no benefits for doing so. Some respondents were interested in temping for extended periods, but they could no longer afford their own medical insurance and they did not want to risk being without coverage. In fact, lack of benefits and lack of guaranteed income were the two most negative features of temporary work for the participants on this study.

Despite the negative aspects of temporary work, many women are grateful that it exists and would temp again, especially when in-between jobs. Some women in the sample regard temporary work as the only advantage women have over men in the labor market. Temporary work enabled them to leave jobs without having first secured another. Even women who do not usually work in clerical positions are able to use clerical temporary work as an alternative to unemployment and a buffer against joblessness (although this safety net functions best for educated women and women who possess computer skills).

### Policy Issues

For many women, temporary work legitimately serves a need for access to work - and thus income - on an interim basis. The dilemma is to balance this function so that the safety net does not become a trap. Because the increased reliance of employers on temporary workers derives from business requirements, temporary work may be expanding at a rate that exceeds the number



of women who want or need this type of work. Temporary work may become less a buffer on an interim basis and more a last resort because fewer permanent jobs are available. Since temporary work is characterized by contingent conditions, this scenario has negative long-term implications for workers.

There are good reasons to be critical of contingent jobs. In general, they provide inferior terms of employment for workers: low pay, insecurity, few benefits, little possibility for advancement. Temporary work is the archetypical contingent work form; temporary workers have no guarantees for continued employment, for the actual work available to them, for consistent wages, or thus for income. Temporary services need not even formally fire temps - they can simply stop offering assignments.

A concomitant of the dramatic increases in contingent jobs is the loss of jobs that offer core conditions of employment. Fewer workers and fewer families are protected by the benefits associated with core jobs, which include some measure of job security, medical and pension benefits, vacation, sick leave and disability, and opportunities for training and advancement.

Some unions are striving to eliminate contingent work and, failing that, to increase the standard of living of contingent workers. Union strategies include organizing contingent workers and bargaining for economic parity, pro-rated benefits and lower hourly thresholds for inclusion in bargaining units, along with negotiating limits on employers' use of contingent workers.

Union efforts are important and should be supported by appropriate policies. However, declining rates of unionization and declining union power (as illustrated by employee-givebacks and cost-sharing of benefits) indicate that internal labor market solutions are not sufficient. National policies such as universal medical insurance and family leave policies can mitigate the effects on all workers and families of the erosion of employee benefits and the reduction in employer responsibility.

This study suggests that education and skills in demand protect against some of the negative features of temporary work. However, training and education will not solve the problem of a smaller base of 'good jobs.' Furthermore, as long as inequalities in the labor market persist, some people will have to work in contingent, i.e., bad, jobs. Again, national policies that protect all citizens are required.

Women are especially vulnerable to contingent jobs. Occupational segregation restricts the jobs to which they have access, and the jobs they do get are more likely to be constructed under contingent conditions. Family variables do not account for women's over-representation among temporary workers. Rather, it results from the sex-segregated labor market in which women are concentrated in fewer occupational categories than men, especially so in administrative support occupations.

Contingent work in general, and temporary work in particular, are alleged to fulfill women's special needs for

flexibility in their labor force participation, yet temporary work provides only limited flexibility. Moreover, flexibility is not the dominant goal of the women who temp.

Nevertheless, many women workers do have legitimate needs and desires for flexibility, and policies that foster genuine flexibility can help ease their double burden. Two dilemmas challenge policy-makers. First, in devising work conditions that are supportive of women who need (or want) to work less than full-time and/or full-year, they must also strive to ensure that core jobs are available to everyone who needs or wants them and that their employment conditions are not undermined by contingent work.

Second, the gendered division of labor is predicated on women as the primary family caretakers. Thus, it is women who must compromise in order to combine paid and family work. Can we develop policies that support a redistribution of responsibility for family and paid work more equitably between men and women? Gender-neutral family leave is one example of policies that potentially contribute to this goal.

This study provides some insight into why black women are over-represented among temporary workers. The simple, surface answer is that black women have higher unemployment rates than white women and so are more likely to be in-between jobs. The black women in the study were also dismissed from permanent jobs at a higher rate than the white women. These answers intimate

that, to some extent, labor market discrimination accounts for the high proportion of black women among temporary workers.

In part because of the small number of black participants, this study could not determine if black women are also subjected to systematic discrimination while temping. Some of the evidence suggests that the differences between white and black temps can be explained by other factors. However, further study with a larger sample is required to form reliable conclusions about the relationship between ethnicity and temporary work.

The position of older and retired women in the temporary workforce is more of a long-term issue rather than a pressing one. The THS industry is beginning to prepare for an influx of older women into the temporary workforce. For example, Manpower Inc. has developed large-type and computer screens for bifocals for their testing and training components. The older women in this study, however, were most concerned about the lack of part-time and other alternative temporary assignments. Among other reasons, retired women do not want to work full-time because of limits imposed on earnings by social security regulations. If temporary work is to meet the needs of older workers, the industry must arrange for more assignments with alternative schedules.

The results of this study neither unequivocally support nor unequivocally reject calls for regulating the temporary help industry. There are valid concerns about false or misleading advertising of the amount of work, the type of work schedules,

the wage rates and the benefit packages available from temporary services. Not only temps express these concerns. Temporary services also claim that not all of their competitors are honest about their practices, but there is no evidence that the majority of temporary services are fraudulent. Still, the exceptional growth of this industry and our relatively incomplete understanding of its forms and functions warrant additional research as well as monitoring for possible intervention and regulation.



## Notes

1. The term contingent work is not conceptually precise. Some definitions of contingent work rely on jobs categories (i.e. part-time, temporary, etc...) while others specify dimensions of the employment contract (time, degree of permanency and the social contract) as the determining features (Christensen and Murphree 1988). It's not clear, for example, if part-time work that is stable and benefitted should be considered contingent. Nevertheless, the term provides a useful shorthand for discussing these types of labor processes and work forms.

2. Only two of the eleven services interviewed agreed to furnish names and addresses of their temps. One of these was a very small service. The staff person designated to work with me left her position before the study began, however, and the owner went on maternity leave. In the end, the owner decided she had neither time nor staff to work with me. The owners and managers from the other services declined to participate for a variety of reasons. Some did not think their workers (or "my ladies") would be interested in the study. Others said their corporate headquarters would not allow them to participate. One regional manager thought his temps might get confused because his company conducts its own surveys. The service representatives also thought that cooperation with the study would be an invasion of their employees' privacy.

3. I received four questionnaires from city temps who were light industrial rather than clerical workers. I relied on the service to send the questionnaires to the appropriate people. I have no way of knowing how many ineligible women received the questionnaire.

4. The women who were on temporary assignments at Temple received the questionnaire through inter-office mail.

5. Everyone I spoke with about this study - colleagues, friends, business people who use temporary workers - believed this stereotype fits some portion of temporary workers. Even the services implied that some temps fit this portrait. In the personal interviews, the temps also said there are "bad" temps who are incompetent, unqualified, unprofessional, lazy, etc. It should be no surprise that none of the respondents included themselves in this category. In fact, most considered themselves above average in capability and professionalism. And indeed, few women I spoke with appeared to fit this stereotype. They were articulate and skilled and most have years of full-time permanent work experience. Similarly, the survey data do not support this stereotype. It is possible, of course, that such workers are represented among temporary workers, just as they exist among all categories of workers. It is plausible that only temps with positive employment histories would choose to participate in a research project, and it

is equally likely that few people would admit their weaknesses to an interviewer.

6. Only one woman in the sample would be in this category. She works independently as a clown and temped because business was slow. It seems very odd to couch temping's benefit to artists, etc. as "keeping in touch with the business world" rather than earning money, which is the real motivation.

7. The questionnaire asked the respondents to give the number and ages of children they either partially or fully support. Thus, other respondents may have grown children whom they no longer help support. I discovered in one interview that the woman has 4 children, grade school through college-aged, living with her but she had answered zero to this item in the questionnaire. Since she has not been successful getting much temporary work and, therefore, doesn't bring in much income to the family, she did not consider herself to be someone who helps support the family. There was no discrepancy in the number of children counted in the survey and talked about in the interviews for any other respondent. However, there may be other respondents (from among those I did not interview) who similarly interpreted the questionnaire item, and thus, the number of women with children may be under-counted. I doubt this happened in more than one or two cases, however.

8. That only a small proportion of women in the sample have young children may account for the fact that the women in their forties are the ones with children.

9. There are only four older single women and 13 older married women, so this is a tentative conclusion.

10. It may be that when a service does not have enough assignments for everyone who wants work, the managers give assignments to their better temps - even if it means these women get lower level assignments. The women suggested that the services could at least pay them their regular rate when this happens, especially in the case where the managers' plead with them to take an assignment.

11. This may be an artifact of self-selection into the sample. Most of the women I interviewed were articulate, had years of experience, and, in general, presented themselves very well. It may also be that more temps are offered permanent jobs from a temp assignment than accept, as was indeed the case for the women in this study. The services would not necessarily know all of these instances.

12. Client companies sometimes specifically request a particular temp at regular intervals. This situation was especially common at a few pharmaceutical companies in the suburbs. For some women, the personnel office no longer calls the service to request their time; managers of the various departments work out dates directly with

the temps, then the company informs the temporary service of the arrangements.

13. There are other temporary help services positions: light industrial assembly and packaging, consumer product demonstration, market research, etc., but these are not more appropriate to their skills nor are they better compensated.

14. I have no direct measures of skills for the women in the sample. All discussion about skills is based on the respondents' answers to a series of questions about their experiences using computers in jobs and on the qualitative interview data.

15. Fifty-eight of the 62 suburban respondents are registered with the same service (the other four may also be, but I don't know this for sure.) This service does offer some training (although only 87% said it did and three percent did not know if training is available). It may still be the case, however, that suburban agencies are more likely to offer training, or perhaps that suburban temps are more aware of the programs offered by their agencies. Two-thirds of the city sample from the branch office of the dominant suburban agency and 56% of the other city respondents said there is training offered.

16. It is difficult to judge from the questionnaires how many other women believe they have improved their skills through temping. Some respondents commented on this topic in their open-ended responses, but none of the survey questions specifically asked about on-the-job training.

17. This is another situation where some temps over their own ability to learn on the job but say they have encountered other temps who have no idea what they are doing on computers, yet were placed in assignments requiring computer skills.

18. Dictaphone transcription has the highest average hourly rate for any category examined (\$10.75), but only four women did this as one of their major tasks, so it's difficult to know if this reflects the market. It may be that, as a rare skill, it is more highly compensated.

19. BLS Wage Survey data for 1987 for the Philadelphia PMSA exhibit a similar relationship between average rates and temporary assignment title: Word processors earned the highest average rates (\$8.26), receptionists earned lower average rates (\$5.43) and general office clerks earned the lowest average rates (\$5.09). The 1987 rates are not directly comparable to the sample's rates, which were earned late in 1990 and early in 1991.

20. Throughout our interview, a woman who owns a franchise in a suburb that borders Philadelphia referred to her temporary employees as "suburban ladies" and "Philadelphia people," even



though the Philadelphia temps are women, too. She maintains that the suburban temps are looking for a little money and something to do with their time, but the city women are working as temps because they do not know how to find own jobs on their own, thus they rely on services to find positions. She thinks it is the job-hunting and self-presentation skills that city women lack, not the work skills needed for a position.

21. A colleague suggested this dynamic is similar to the fast food industry which pays suburban workers more than city workers.

22. The BLS comparisons are also with area wage surveys.

23. In some services, information about group rates is limited to placing NATS brochures in the office's reception area. At a 1990 conference titled "Hiring, Managing, Compensating and Training Your Temporary Workforce," sponsored by the Institute for International Research, a representative from a temporary service in New York City reported that she had been unable to find an insurance company that would cover health benefits for her temporary employees except at exorbitant costs. She characterized the health insurance offered through NATS as a minor, non-contributory plan.

24. It may be that as the number of temps - and perhaps the length of time they remain with a service - increases, services have raised vacation requirements to limit the number of temps who receive this benefit. This is speculative, since my data do not directly address this matter.

25. One woman alleged that, according to the invoice for her services, a client paid the temporary service for her time for a company holiday but the service never paid her (if so, that means they kept her wages plus the mark-up). Most women interviewed said they usually are aware of the amount of money the services charge for their labor because they open the mail as part of their assignment. Other workers in the offices usually make sure the temps see the invoices.

26. One manager disputed the notion that temping can be considered a career. Other owners and managers, though, talked with pride about career temps.

27. The women in the sample seem to have higher length of service averages than that most managers estimated as the usual length of service for their temps. This may be a bias in the sample; it is conceivable that women who have temped longer would be more interested in participating in a study about temping. In some cases, though, the length of time continuously registered with a temporary agency is inflated because the respondent had a full-time permanent position for some of the period. For cases where I have interview as well as survey data, I checked the text of the

interview against the answers and comments on the survey to make sure these were reported consistently.

28. It is predictable that age can account for time variables and I have tried to distinguish between actual and spurious relationships. However, there are only a small number of women in their forties in the sample, so these results should be considered suggestive.

29. Time away from permanent, full-time work should not be equated with time out of the work force; all of the women have worked in temporary work since their last permanent job (although not necessarily for the entire time they have been away from that job). They may also have worked part-time during this period.

30. Respondents were asked to give the number of years and/or months they spent out of the labor force for six categories: to care for children, to care for other family members, to be in school, unemployed, to take a break, and other reasons. The instructions were not to count time in school if they did not work for pay before beginning school; they had to have stopped work first and then return to school.

31. Remember that children is defined as partially or fully supporting at least one child 18 years or younger. College-age children living with their families are excluded on the assumption that they do not require the same level of care and attention as younger children.

32. The four occupation variables in the data set have been coded with the census three digit occupation codes, and then grouped into the one digit census categories.



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**Table 1. Characteristics of Temporary Help Services**

	United States	Philadelphia PMSA+
<b><u>Size of Establishment</u></b>		
Under 100 workers*	13	13
100 to 249 workers	30	35
250 to 299 workers	12	22
500 workers or more	46	30
<b><u>Office Locations</u></b>		
Locations in 2 or more countries	44	39
Multiple areas or counties	32	31
Multiple locations in one area	9	8
Single location	15	22
<b><u>Type of Ownership</u></b>		
Independent (single location)	17	22
Franchise	11	8
Branch of parent company	72	70
Office clerical is primary type of worker placed	68	87

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Industry Wage Survey: Temporary Help Supply, September 1987.

\* The BLS survey was limited to firms with at least 50 employees.

+ The Philadelphia PMSA includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, PA and Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties, NJ.

Note: All figures are percentages; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Table 2. Description and Distribution of Control Variables**

	<u>Percent of Sample</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
<u>Sample Type</u>		
City	35	34
Suburban	65	62
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
Black	29	27
White	71	67
<u>Age</u>		
< 40	63	49
40's	17	16
> 49	19	18
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single*	62	58
Married	38	36
<u>Children+</u>		
Yes	20	19
No	80	76
<u>Education</u>		
High school degree or lower	19	18
Some college or business school	52	49
Bachelor's degree or higher	29	27
<u>Main Occupation is Clerical</u>		
Yes	54	50
No	46	43
<u>Computer Skills~</u>		
Low	31	30
Medium	31	30
High	38	36

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ This variable measures the number of women who either fully or partially support at least one child aged 18 or younger. 'No children' includes women whose youngest children are over eighteen.

~ This variable is a composite of ten separate items which measure various computer skills. Low computer skills means the respondent has 0 through 3 skills; medium represent 4 through 6 skills; high represent 7 through 10 skills.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding. Totals may not add to 96 because of missing data.

Table 4. Most Important Reason for Working as a Temporary

	Total	Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children*		Education			Main Occupation Is Clerical		In School	
		City	Suburbs	Black	White	< 40	40's	> 49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	LE HS	Post HS~	OE BA	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Substitute Work</b>	63%	60%	64%	55%	66%	70%	53%	41%	77%	44%	53%	65%	53%	65%	70%	58%	72%	67%	61%
Full-Time Work	9	7	10	13	6	12	-	-	13	3	11	8	5	9	12	9	10	15	5
Earn Income	23	13	28	13	28	21	20	29	22	26	26	22	16	29	19	13	36	41	15
Find Permanent Job	31	40	26	29	32	37	33	12	42	15	16	35	32	27	39	36	26	11	41
<b>Flexibility</b>	34%	31%	35%	37%	31%	28%	34%	53%	20%	54%	48%	29%	42%	28%	31%	37%	29%	34%	34%
Work When Want To	11	3	15	4	14	9	-	29	5	21	11	11	16	11	8	11	10	15	10
Don't Want Perm Job	6	7	5	13	3	4	7	12	4	6	-	7	5	7	4	9	2	4	7
Time With Children	4	7	3	4	3	4	7	-	-	12	21	-	5	4	-	9	-	-	5
Other Activities	7	7	7	8	6	7	13	-	7	6	5	7	-	4	15	2	12	11	5
Less Stressful	6	7	5	8	5	4	7	12	4	9	11	4	16	2	4	6	5	4	7
<b>Experience</b>	4%	10%	2%	8%	3%	2%	14%	6%	4%	3%	-	6%	5%	6%	-	6%	-	-	6%
Improve Skills	2	3	2	-	3	-	7	6	2	3	-	3	5	2	-	2	-	-	3
Need Experience	2	7	-	8	-	2	7	-	2	-	-	3	-	4	-	4	-	-	3

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

\* Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degree) or business school.

Note: All figures are percentages; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.



Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Women With No F-T Work Experience</u>	<u>Women With No Computer Skills</u>	<u>Women With No Time Out Of Labor Force</u>
City	35	20	20	35
Suburbs	65	80	80	65
<u>Ethnicity</u>				
Black	29	27	20	32
White	71	73	80	68
<u>Age</u>				
Under 30	50	100	22	65
30's	14	-	-	12
40's	17	-	22	6
50's	13	-	22	6
60's	6	-	33	12
Mean Age	34	22	51	33
<u>Family Status</u>				
Single, no dependents	51	100	30	68
Single, dependents	11	-	10	9
Married, no dependents	20	-	60	15
Married, dependents	18	-	-	9
<u>N of Dependent Children</u>				
None	73	100	80	88
One	14	-	10	6
Two	10	-	10	6
Three or more	3	-	-	-
% With School-Age Children	20	-	20	-
<u>Education</u>				
High school or less	19	-	50	15
Some college or business school	52	60	40	56
BA or more	29	40	10	29
<u>Main Occupation is Clerical</u>				
Yes	54	27	67	56
No	46	73	33	44
(N)	(96)	(15)	(10)	(34)
Percent of Population	100	16	10	35

Note: All figures are percentages except for mean age; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 5. Relations with Temporary Services

	Total	Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children +		Education				Main Occupation Is Clerical		Computer Skills		
		City	Suburbs	Black	White	< 40	40's	> 49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	LE HS	Post	GE BA	Yes	No	Low**	Medium	High	
														HS~							
<b>Number of Services Registered With</b>																					
One	33	41	29	48	28	35	20	38	35	30	19	37	35	26	42	27	37	41	24	35	
More than one	67	59	71	52	72	65	80	62	65	70	81	63	65	74	58	73	63	59	76	65	
<b>Mean Time Registered With Services (years)</b>																					
	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.2	1.9	3.7	2.3	1.9	2.8	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	1.9	2.8	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.4	
<b>Want Full-Time Temp Work</b>																					
	57	70	50	77	49	60	60	50	64	44	53	58	56	60	54	66	45	44	63	62	
<b>Get Full-Time Temp Work</b>																					
	62	70	55	85	48	77	33	38	64	60	80	56	44	64	64	65	58	42	58	76	
<b>Length of Last Assignment</b>																					
< 1 week	22	25	21	16	25	14	25	47	23	23	11	25	41	18	19	19	26	45	10	14	
1 to 4 weeks	40	34	44	28	43	48	25	24	39	46	50	39	24	43	46	35	49	24	60	37	
> 4 weeks	37	41	36	56	31	38	50	29	39	31	39	36	35	39	35	46	26	31	30	49	
<b>Hours per Day on Last Assignment</b>																					
< 7	8	13	6	16	6	9	12	6	10	6	11	8	6	8	11	4	14	10	-	14	
7 to 10	92	87	94	84	94	91	88	94	90	94	89	92	94	92	89	96	86	90	100	86	
<b>Restrictions or Preferences on Availability for Temp Work</b>																					
	34	25	40	16	43	32	27	50	31	41	39	34	33	32	39	26	43	42	27	35	
<b>Assignments Met Restrictions</b>																					
All did	77	86	74	75	77	82	100	50	87	64	86	74	60	87	78	75	82	70	88	75	
Some did	20	14	22	25	19	12	-	50	13	29	14	22	40	13	22	25	18	30	-	25	
Few did	3	1	4	-	4	6	-	-	-	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	
<b>Accepted Undesirable Assignments</b>																					
Many times	7	12	5	7	6	5	13	6	7	8	16	5	16	8	-	10	5	13	7	3	
A few times	37	27	44	33	39	25	69	44	32	47	47	36	39	38	33	35	37	30	43	39	
Once	15	27	8	30	9	19	6	11	12	17	26	12	22	14	7	20	7	23	10	11	
Never	41	35	44	30	46	51	13	39	50	28	11	47	22	39	59	34	51	33	40	47	
<b>Turned Down Assignments</b>																					
Many times	12	3	18	-	18	14	-	22	10	17	-	16	17	6	22	8	16	13	3	19	
A few times	53	47	56	48	54	39	94	56	47	61	63	51	44	59	44	56	49	50	70	42	
Once	20	32	13	37	13	27	6	11	29	6	26	18	28	18	19	18	23	23	10	25	
Never	15	18	13	15	15	20	-	11	14	17	11	15	11	16	15	18	12	13	17	14	

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degree) or business school.

\*\* Low skills includes women with no computer skills.

Note: All figures are percentages, except mean time registered with temp services; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 6. Looking for Permanent Work, Offered Temp-to-Perm Position and Preferences to Temporary Work

		Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children +		Education			Main Occupation is Clerical	
	Total	City	Suburbs	Black	White	<40	40's	>49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	LE HS	Post HS~	GE BA	Yes	No
Looking for Permanent Job	54	68	47	66	50	55	69	41	59	47	53	55	58	49	59	63	44
Perm F-T	50	59	44	59	45	52	63	29	57	41	53	48	53	43	55	57	39
Perm P-T	4	9	3	7	5	3	6	12	2	6	-	7	5	6	4	6	5
Time Spent Looking for Permanent Job (mean weeks)	33	49	21	54	22	26	59	28	34	33	38	19	48	37	19	42	20
Offered Temp-to-Perm Position																	
Once	27	38	21	44	21	63	17	21	22	31	32	25	39	25	22	31	23
More than once	40	28	47	28	44	39	44	44	35	51	42	40	28	43	44	33	47
Never	33	34	32	28	28	35	31	28	43	17	35	26	33	32	33	35	30
Accepted Temp-To-Perm Position	19	19	19	28	16	19	25	11	26	16	26	17	33	19	11	25	14
Preferred Alternatives to Temping:**																	
Shorter work day	27	35	23	44	20	31	7	33	32	22	44	24	21	31	23	31	26
Shorter work week	38	47	33	52	32	37	13	61	43	31	44	37	47	35	31	41	35
Regular part-time	35	50	26	41	33	36	33	39	37	31	39	34	37	40	27	37	33
Job-sharing	20	18	21	19	20	19	7	28	18	25	28	18	21	23	12	22	19
Flextime	61	71	56	67	58	56	67	72	58	64	67	61	63	63	54	67	54

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degrees) or business school.

\*\* Respondents checked as many of the alternatives as they preferred, so the figure for each category is based on the total respondents for each subgroup.

Note: All figures are percentages, except mean time looking for a permanent job; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Table 7. Title of Most Recent Temporary Assignment and the Associated Average Hourly Rates**

	<u>Average Rate</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Word Processing Operator	10.18	7
Data Entry Operator	7.47	9
Secretary, No Word Processing	8.25	5
Secretary, Word Processing	9.80	33
Receptionist, No Word Processing	7.53	9
Receptionist, Word Processing	7.14	15
General Clerk	6.79	16

Note: Switchboard operators and 'other' are excluded because fewer than 5 respondents were in these categories. The percentages, therefore, do not add to 100.

**Table 8. Main Tasks on Most Recent Assignment and the Associated Average Hourly Rates**

	<u>Main Task</u>		<u>Percent of Sample</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
Typing	8.72	8.20	24
Filing	7.54	8.57	23
Data Entry	7.35	8.47	13
Switchboard Operation	7.71	8.38	7
Provide Information Over Phone	8.50	8.10	55
Word Processing	9.88	7.51	33
Schedule Appointments and Meetings	8.89	8.25	11
Process Mail/Orders/Claims/Other	8.26	8.34	16
Receptionist	7.60	8.55	23
Prepare Mailings	7.46	8.43	10
Photocopy	8.38	8.33	17

Note: This table reflects the three main tasks performed by each respondent on their most recent assignment. Tasks which fewer than 5 respondents performed are excluded from the table (i.e., shorthand, dictaphone transcription, bookkeeping, spreadsheet entry, database management and payroll processing).

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Table 9. Skills and Training

	Total	Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children +		Education				Main Occupation Is Clerical		Computer Skills		
		City	Suburbs	Black	White	< 40	40's	> 49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	Post			Yes	No	Low	Medium	High	
													LE HS	HS~	GE BA						
<b>Computer Skills</b>																					
None	10	6	13	7	12	3	13	28	7	17	11	11	28	8	4	12	7				
Low	21	29	16	22	21	17	25	33	24	14	21	21	39	18	15	24	16				
Medium	31	24	36	22	33	32	38	17	26	42	42	28	22	31	33	36	26				
High	38	41	36	48	34	48	25	22	43	28	26	41	11	43	48	28	51				
<b>Mean Number of Computer Skills</b>																					
	5	5	5	6	5	6	5	3	5	5	5	5	3	5	6	5	6	1	5	8	
<b>Mean Years Using Computers</b>																					
	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.3	3.8	4.0	5.1	2.8	3.7	4.6	4.0	3.9	1.8	4.7	4.2	4.3	3.8	1.3	4.7	5.6	
<b>Match Between Skills and Last Temp Assignment</b>																					
Over-qualified	50	48	50	40	53	53	50	35	55	42	47	51	28	43	81	38	65	41	45	60	
Under-qualified	5	7	5	4	6	4	13	6	5	6	6	5	11	6	-	7	5	10	7	-	
Well-matched	45	45	45	56	41	44	38	59	40	53	47	44	61	51	19	55	30	48	48	40	
<b>Want Computer Training</b>																					
Yes (have skills, want more)	63	85	50	85	52	68	63	50	64	58	78	58	56	74	44	72	51	50	77	61	
Yes (no skills yet)	4	3	8	4	7	-	13	22	5	8	-	8	6	4	4	8	2	20	-	-	
No	32	12	42	11	41	32	24	28	31	34	22	34	38	22	52	20	47	30	23	39	
<b>Want Some Other Training</b>																					
	27	35	23	26	29	25	37	29	33	20	26	28	37	29	20	30	21	31	20	31	
<b>Service Recommended Training</b>																					
	37	32	39	26	39	34	50	28	29	47	42	34	42	29	42	40	30	40	33	36	
<b>Service Offers Training</b>																					
	72	53	82	48	81	69	88	61	67	81	63	75	67	69	78	68	74	70	80	68	
<b>Taken Some Training Offered By Service</b>																					
	27	26	27	19	30	20	44	33	21	39	32	26	33	27	26	28	26	23	30	28	

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degree) or business school.

Note: All figures are percentages, except mean number of computer skills and mean years working with computers. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Table 10. Average Hourly Rates**

<b>TOTAL SAMPLE</b>	<b>8.32</b>
<u><b>Sample Type</b></u>	
City	7.76
Suburban	8.61
<u><b>Ethnicity</b></u>	
Black	7.93
White	8.46
<u><b>Age</b></u>	
< 40	8.25
40's	8.67
> 49	8.23
<u><b>Marital Status</b></u>	
Single*	8.14
Married	8.65
<u><b>Children†</b></u>	
Yes	8.58
No	8.26
<u><b>Education</b></u>	
High school degree or lower	7.43
Some college or business school	8.49
Bachelor's degree or higher	8.58
<u><b>Main Occupation is Clerical</b></u>	
Yes	8.09
No	8.57
<u><b>Computer Skills</b></u>	
None	6.78
Low	7.17
Medium	8.86
High	8.94

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

† Children is defined as having at least one child 18 years old or younger living at home.

Table 11. Benefits

	Available to Temps from THS Service (Nationally)*	Available to Temps from THS Service (Phila PMSA)*	Available to Temps from THS Service (This Sample)	Received from THS Service (This Sample)	Available from Other Sources+ (This Sample)	Received In Last Permanent Job (This Sample)
Employer Provided Medical Insurance	2	3	++	++	33	74
Employer Provided Dental Insurance	na	na	na	na	25	61
Co-Paid Health Insurance	21	3	10	0	15	9
Group Rates on Health Insurance	++	++	29	1	++	10
Pension	++	++	7	0	21	64
Disability	na	na	na	na	na	71
Vacation	74	91	38	12	na	91
Paid Holidays	37	31	28	13	na	90
Sick Leave	na	na	na	na	na	86
Dependent Care	2~	0	++	++	1	12
Tuition	++	++	13**	++	3	50
Referral Bonuses	62	59	39	9	na	na
Training	55	58	72	27	na	++

\* Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Industry Wage Survey: Temporary Help Supply, September 1987.

+ Two-fifths of the respondents had no benefits available from other sources, one-fourth were covered by their spouse's benefit plan, 14% were covered by their parent's health insurance, one-tenth paid for health insurance offered through their previous jobs, and 12% had some other source (DPA or pension, for example).

~ The category for the BLS data is specifically child care.

\*\* Percentage of respondents registered with temporary services which pay some portion of fees for courses taken elsewhere.

++ No data available.

na Not Applicable.

Note: All figures are percentages. The BLS figures are percentage of temporary workers registered with temporary services which have formal provisions for the benefits (not percent of establishments which offer the benefit). There are no national data for the proportion of temps who receive the benefits. The percentages of temps with benefits available from other sources are calculated using all respondents.

The percentages of respondents who received benefits in their last permanent job are calculated without the 15 respondents with no full time, permanent work experience.

Table 12. Labor Force Experience

	Total	Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children +		Education		
		City	Suburbs	Black	White	< 40	40's	> 49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	LE HS	Post HS~	GE BA
Mean Years Of Full-Time Perm Work	9.0	7.8	9.7	7.4	9.7	3.6	15.1	21.1	7.4	11.7	7.4	9.5	14.7	8.5	5.3
Mean Years Of Temporary Work	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.0	2.6	2.0	5.1	3.2	2.3	3.4	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.4
Mean Years Of Part-Time Work	2.1	2.2	2.0	1.8	2.3	1.9	3.5	1.8	2.2	1.9	2.6	2.0	1.7	2.3	2.2
Mean Years In Clerical/Secretarial Work	8.4	8.0	8.7	6.9	9.1	4.8	13.7	16.1	7.6	9.8	8.0	8.6	12.5	9.8	3.2
Main Occupation Is Clerical (%)	54%	73%	43%	74%	44%	43%	80%	65%	46%	65%	79%	47%	89%	58%	19%
Last Permanent Job Was Clerical (%)	67%	77%	60%	70%	64%	60%	80%	67%	63%	69%	74%	64%	78%	65%	16%
Mean Years Since Last Permanent Job	3.4	2.6	3.9	2.4	3.8	1.6	4.3	7.3	1.7	6.0	3.8	3.3	4.8	3.5	2.3
Mean Years For Length Of Last Permanent Job	5.2	4.4	5.6	5.1	5.3	2.3	4.8	11.8	3.5	6.6	4.0	5.6	7.8	4.5	4.0
Means Years Out Of The Labor Force	3.4	2.4	4.0	2.2	3.0	1.0	6.8	8.4	2.2	5.6	4.5	3.1	5.0	3.4	2.5
Spent Time Out Of The Labor Force (%)	64%	64%	64%	59%	65%	55%	87%	67%	56%	72%	79%	60%	74%	60%	62%
No Full-Time Permanent Work (%)	16%	9%	16%	15%	16%	25%	0%	0%	28%	26%	0%	20%	0%	18%	22%

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degree) or business school.

**Table 13. Occupation of Last Permanent Job and Main Occupation**

	<u>Occupation of Last Permanent Job</u>	<u>Main Occupation</u>
Administrative Support	67	64
Professional/Managerial	9	14
Other	13*	7+
Student	-	16
None	12	-

\* Other includes the following occupational categories: 2 technical support, 1 service, 4 sales, 2 operators.

+ Other includes the following occupational categories: 1 technical support, 1 service, 4 sales.

Note: All figures are percentages; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

**Table 14. Occupation of Last Permanent Job by Main Occupation**

	<u>Main Occupation</u>			
<u>Occupation of Last Permanent Job</u>	<u>Administrative Support</u>	<u>Professional/ Managerial</u>	<u>Other+</u>	<u>Student</u>
Administrative Support	84	31	17	36
Professional/Managerial	4	54	17	-
Other*	5	-	67	7
None	7	15	-	57

\* Other includes the following occupational categories: 2 technical support, 1 service, 4 sales, 2 operators.

+ Other includes the following occupational categories: 1 technical support, 1 service, 4 sales.

Note: All figures are percentages; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.



Table 15. Occupation and Reason for Leaving Last Permanent Job

	Total	Sample		Ethnicity		Age			Marital Status		Children+		Education				In School	
		City	Suburbs	Black	White	< 40	40's	> 49	Single*	Married	Yes	No	LE HS	Post HS~	GE BA	Yes	No	
<b>Occupation of Last Permanent Full-Time Job**</b>																		
Clerical/secretarial	67	77	60	70	64	60	80	67	63	69	74	64	78	85	15	68	65	
Other administrative support	9	7	10	9	9	14	-	6	10	7	16	7	-	8	21	16	7	
Professional/managerial	13	3	19	4	17	17	-	17	10	17	-	17	-	5	42	11	14	
Other	12	13	10	17	9	10	20	11	17	6	10	12	22	2	21	5	14	
<b>Reason for Leaving Last Permanent Full-Time Job++</b>																		
Laid off	11	15	10	21	6	12	-	17	12	12	6	13	12	12	6	17	8	
Dismissed	6	7	5	16	2	9	7	-	12	-	6	6	6	9	-	12	4	
Health	11	7	14	5	13	6	20	12	15	9	17	10	6	14	13	12	12	
Maternity	9	7	10	5	10	9	7	12	3	15	24	4	23	6	-	-	12	
Bad experience	11	19	7	16	10	12	20	6	12	2	17	10	12	12	13	6	14	
Retired	6	4	7	5	6	-	-	24	3	9	-	8	18	-	6	-	8	
Respondent moved	10	15	7	21	6	6	20	12	6	12	17	8	6	14	6	12	10	
School	9	15	5	5	10	17	-	-	12	6	6	10	-	9	19	24	4	
Other personal reasons	10	4	14	-	15	12	13	-	12	9	-	13	-	9	25	-	14	
Other job-related reasons	16	7	21	5	21	18	13	18	15	18	6	19	18	15	13	18	16	

\* Single includes never married, separated, divorced and widowed women.

+ Children is defined as fully or partially supporting at least one child aged 18 or younger.

~ Post high school means some college (including associate's degree) or business school.

\*\* 15 respondents never worked in a permanent full-time job.

++ Seven percent of the sample were in a permanent job when they participated in the survey.

Note: All figures are percentages; they may not add to 100 because of rounding.

### Appendix A: Characteristics of Respondents Who Participated in a Follow-up Interview

City Respondents				Suburban Respondents			
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Children</u>
Black	23	Single	No	Black	24	Single	No
White	23	Single	No	White	25	Single	No
Black	26	Single	No	White	28	Single	No
Black	26	Married	Yes	White	28	Married	No
White	26	Married	No	White	32	Married	No
Black	28	Single	Yes	White	46	Married	Yes
Black	29	Single	Yes	White	48	Married	Yes
White	29	Single	No	White	49	Single	No
Black	32	Married	Yes	White	53	Married	Yes
Black	36	Single	No	White	54	Married	No
Black	37	Married	Yes	White	59	Single	No
Black	62	Married	No				

**Appendix B: The Questionnaire**

# **A STUDY OF TEMPORARY WORKERS**

**A research project about  
women clerical temporary workers**

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*For further information contact:*

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## SECTION I

In this first section, I will ask you some questions about your most recent temporary assignment. [If you are currently working in a temporary assignment, please answer the questions in this section in terms of your current assignment.]

Q 1 What was the job title of your most recent temporary assignment? (Circle number)

- 1 WORD PROCESSING OPERATOR
- 2 DATA ENTRY OPERATOR
- 3 TYPIST/SECRETARY WITHOUT WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 4 SECRETARY WITH WORD PROCESSING AND/OR OTHER COMPUTER DUTIES
- 5 SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR
- 6 RECEPTIONIST WITH WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 7 RECEPTIONIST WITHOUT WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 8 OFFICE CLERK WITHOUT TYPING
- 9 BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTING CLERK
- 10 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 2 How long did your last assignment last? [If you are still working, how long do you expect the assignment to last?] (Write in number of days or weeks)

\_\_\_\_\_ DAY(S) or \_\_\_\_\_ WEEK(S)

Q 3 How many hours, on average, did you work per day? (Write in number of hours)

\_\_\_\_\_ HOURS

Q 4 What was the size of the organization/company where you worked? [Please give the total for all employees at that location, not just in the office where you worked.] (Circle number)

- 1 1 TO 5 EMPLOYEES
- 2 6 TO 20 EMPLOYEES
- 3 21 TO 100 EMPLOYEES
- 4 101 TO 500 EMPLOYEES
- 5 MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
- 6 DON'T KNOW

**Q 5** In what type of industry were you working? [If you can't determine the industry, write in the main function or product of the company or organization on the line next to OTHER.] (Circle number)

- 1 MANUFACTURING (eg. clothes, paper, chemicals, furniture, pharmaceuticals, equipment, toys, etc...)
- 2 TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES (eg. SEPTA, Post Office, airlines, Bell, PGW, Philadelphia Electric, etc...)
- 3 WHOLESALE OR RETAIL TRADE (eg. grocery stores, department stores, electrical supply companies, etc...)
- 4 FINANCE, INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE (eg. banks, insurance companies, investment companies, etc...)
- 5 BUSINESS SERVICES (eg. advertising, personnel supply services, computer and data processing companies, etc...)
- 6 PERSONAL SERVICES (eg. hotels, laundries, funeral services, shoe repair shops, etc...)
- 7 ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION SERVICES (eg. theaters, bowling alleys, etc...)
- 8 PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED SERVICES (eg. doctors, dentists, and other health related offices, law offices, schools, colleges, libraries, social services, accounting firms, etc...)
- 9 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (eg. legislative offices, city offices, etc...)
- 10 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Q 6** What was your hourly pay rate for this assignment? (Write in amount)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ PER HOUR

**Q 7** Did you perform the following tasks for this temporary assignment? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

a. TYPING (WPM: _____)	YES	NO
b. FILING	YES	NO
c. DATA ENTRY	YES	NO
d. SHORTHAND	YES	NO
e. SWITCHBOARD OPERATION	YES	NO
f. ANSWER TELEPHONE/PROVIDE INFORMATION	YES	NO
g. DICTAPHONE TRANSCRIPTION	YES	NO
h. BOOKKEEPING	YES	NO
i. WORD PROCESSING	YES	NO
j. SPREADSHEET ENTRY	YES	NO
k. DATA BASE MANAGEMENT	YES	NO
l. SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS/MEETINGS	YES	NO
m. PROCESS PAYROLL	YES	NO
n. PROCESS MAIL/ORDERS/CLAIMS/OTHER FORMS	YES	NO
o. RECEPTIONIST	YES	NO
p. PREPARE MAILINGS	YES	NO
q. PHOTOCOPY	YES	NO

Looking back over those items for which you circled YES, please circle the letters of your THREE MAIN TASKS.



Q 8 Please list any other tasks you had on this assignment.

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Q 9 Do you think you were over-qualified, under-qualified or well-matched for this assignment? (Circle number)

- 1 OVER-QUALIFIED
- 2 UNDER-QUALIFIED
- 3 WELL-MATCHED

Q 10 Now I would like you to think back to the two temporary assignments you had before the one you just described. Starting with the assignment just before your last (or current) assignment, please indicate the MAIN tasks you performed for each of the two assignments. [IF YOU HAVE ONLY HAD ONE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT, PLEASE SKIP TO Q 11.]

(Circle YES's in the first column for your main tasks for the assignment before your last and YES's in the second column for your main tasks for the assignment before that one.)

	Assignment One	Assignment Two
a. TYPING (WPM: _____)	YES	YES
b. FILING.....	YES	YES
c. DATA ENTRY.....	YES	YES
d. SHORTHAND.....	YES	YES
e. SWITCHBOARD OPERATION.....	YES	YES
f. ANSWER TELEPHONE/PROVIDE INFORMATION.....	YES	YES
g. DICTAPHONE TRANSCRIPTION.....	YES	YES
h. BOOKKEEPING.....	YES	YES
i. WORD PROCESSING.....	YES	YES
j. SPREADSHEET ENTRY.....	YES	YES
k. DATA BASE MANAGEMENT.....	YES	YES
l. SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS/MEETINGS.....	YES	YES
m. PROCESS PAYROLL.....	YES	YES
n. PROCESS MAIL/ORDERS/CLAIMS/OTHER FORMS.....	YES	YES
o. RECEPTIONIST.....	YES	YES
p. PREPARE MAILINGS.....	YES	YES
q. PHOTOCOPY.....	YES	YES
r. OTHER: _____	YES	YES
s. OTHER: _____	YES	YES

Q 11 Aside from your employment through the temporary help service, are you currently working for pay in any other job? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Section II, page 5

Q 12 IF YES, please name the other job(s) that you have:

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## SECTION II

Next I will ask about your reasons for working in temporary employment and about your experiences as an employee of a temporary help service.

[Some people have registered with a temporary help service off and on over the years. If you have registered at different times in your life, please answer this section for the most recent continuous period for which you have been registered with a temporary help service. If you are registered with more than one temporary service, please answer the questions with all of them in mind.]

Q 13 How important were each of the following reasons in your decision to work for a temporary help service?  
(Circle number for each item)

	Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
a. I LIKE TO WORK ONLY WHEN I WANT TO.....	1	2	3
b. I FIND TEMPORARY WORK LESS STRESSFUL.....	1	2	3
c. I NEED/WANT TIME FOR MY CHILDREN.....	1	2	3
d. I NEED/WANT TIME FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS..	1	2	3
e. I NEED/WANT TIME FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES.....	1	2	3
f. THIS IS A WAY TO WORK FULL-TIME.....	1	2	3
g. I NEED/WANT ADDITIONAL INCOME.....	1	2	3
h. I NEED/WANT TO IMPROVE MY JOB SKILLS.....	1	2	3
i. I'M LOOKING FOR A PERMANENT POSITION.....	1	2	3
j. I DON'T WANT A PERMANENT POSITION.....	1	2	3
k. I NEED MORE WORK EXPERIENCE BEFORE I CAN GET A PERMANENT POSITION.....	1	2	3

Q 14 Which of the above is the ONE most important reason why you are working as a temporary employee?  
(Write in letter of the reason from Q 13)

\_\_\_\_\_ MOST IMPORTANT REASON

Q 15 Do any of the following additional reasons apply to you? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

a. I'M BETWEEN OTHER JOBS.....	YES	NO
b. I'M NEW TO THIS AREA.....	YES	NO
c. I'M RE-ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AFTER BEING OUT FOR A WHILE.....	YES	NO
d. I'M RETIRED FROM A PERMANENT JOB.....	YES	NO

Q 16 Please explain any other reasons you have for working as a temporary employee.

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Q 17 Are you looking for a permanent job? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 20

Q 18 IF YES, how long have you been looking for a permanent job?  
(Write in number of years, months or weeks)

\_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S) or \_\_\_\_\_ WEEK(S)

Q 19 IF YES, what kind of work arrangement are you looking for? (Circle number)

- 1 PERMANENT FULL-TIME JOB  
2 PERMANENT PART-TIME JOB  
3 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 20 With how many different temporary services are you currently registered? (Write in number)

\_\_\_\_\_ TEMPORARY SERVICE(S)

Q 21 How long have you been registered with a temporary service? [If you are registered with more than one, think of the longest continuous time you have been registered with a service.]  
(Write in number of years or months)

\_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S)

Q 22 Do you want to work full-time (that is, 5 days/week, 7 hours/day, every week) as a temporary employee?  
(Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 24

Q 23 IF YES, do you receive enough assignments that you generally do work full-time? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO

Q 24 Do you have restrictions on or preferences for the days, times, or periods when you are available for temporary work? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 27

Q 25 IF YES, please explain your restrictions or preferences. [For example, you may want to work only 6 hours a day, you may not want to work during weeks when your children are home from school, or you may have other commitments on specific days of the week.]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q 26 IF YOU DO HAVE CONDITIONS ON YOUR AVAILABILITY FOR TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS, do you receive assignments that meet your conditions? (Circle number)

- 1 ALL OR MOST OF THE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS I AM OFFERED MEET MY AVAILABILITY RESTRICTIONS
- 2 SOME OF THE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS I AM OFFERED MEET MY AVAILABILITY RESTRICTIONS
- 3 FEW OR NONE OF THE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS I AM OFFERED MEET MY AVAILABILITY RESTRICTIONS
- 0 I HAVE ONLY BEEN OFFERED ONE TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT

Q 27 Have you ever accepted temporary assignments that did not fit your desired schedule? (Circle number)

- 1 MANY TIMES
- 2 A FEW TIMES
- 3 ONCE
- 4 NEVER

Q 28 Have you ever turned down a temporary assignment? (Circle number)

- 1 MANY TIMES
- 2 A FEW TIMES
- 3 ONCE
- 4 NEVER

Q 29 Would you prefer any of the following permanent work schedules to temporary employment? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. SHORTER WORK DAY (eg. a 6 hour day, five days a week)..... | YES | NO |
| b. SHORTER WORK WEEK (eg. an 8 hour day, four days a week).   | YES | NO |
| c. REGULAR PART-TIME WORK.....                                | YES | NO |
| d. JOB-SHARING (two people sharing one job).....              | YES | NO |
| e. FLEXTIME (choosing your own starting/finishing time).....  | YES | NO |

Q 30 Were you ever asked to continue on a full-time, permanent basis by any of the companies or organizations where you were sent on temporary assignments? (Circle number)

- 1 YES, ONCE
- 2 YES, MORE THAN ONCE
- 3 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 33, page 8

Q 31 IF YES, did you accept any of the offers? (Circle number)

- 1 YES → IF YES, Skip to Q 33, page 8
- 2 NO

Q 32 IF NO, did you turn down the position for any of the following reasons? [If you have turned down more than one temp-to-perm offer, please answer for the most recent offer.] (Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| a. I WAS NOT INTERESTED IN A PERMANENT POSITION..... | YES | NO |
| b. I DID NOT LIKE THE POSITION.....                  | YES | NO |
| c. I DID NOT LIKE THE COMPANY.....                   | YES | NO |
| d. I DID NOT LIKE PAY RATE OFFERED.....              | YES | NO |
| e. OTHER (Please specify).....                       | YES | NO |

Q 33 Some temporary help services (THS) offer benefits to their employees and others do not. Do the service(s) with which you are currently registered offer these benefits? If so, have you used the benefits, and is it important to you to have this benefit available from a temporary service? (Circle as many YES's as apply to each item)

- |  | This benefit is<br>available to me<br>from a THS | I have<br>received<br>this benefit<br>from a THS | It is important<br>to me to have<br>this benefit<br>from a THS |
|--|--|--|--|
| a. GROUP RATES ON MEDICAL INSURANCE..... | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| b. GROUP RATES ON DENTAL INSURANCE.....  | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| c. CO-PAID MEDICAL INSURANCE.....        | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| d. PENSION PLAN.....                     | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| e. PAID VACATIONS.....                   | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| f. PAID HOLIDAYS.....                    | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| g. REFERRAL BONUSES.....                 | YES  | YES  | YES  |
| h. OTHER (Please specify).....           | YES  | YES  | YES  |

### Section III

Now I will ask you some questions about your computer skills and job-related training.

These first questions relate to your computer experiences in all of your work, not just in your temporary assignments.  
[IF YOU HAVE NEVER USED COMPUTERS IN ANY JOB, PLEASE SKIP TO Q 47, PAGE 9.]  
(Circle YES or NO for each question)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| Q 34 Have you worked as a data entry operator?.....   | YES | NO |
| Q 35 Can you operate dedicated word processing equipment?<br>(eg. AES, Xerox, Microm, Wang, CRT, etc....).....  | YES | NO |
| Q 36 Can you operate two or more types of dedicated word processing equipment?.....   | YES | NO |
| Q 37 Do you know how to operate word processing software for a personal computer<br>(eg. Word Perfect, Microsoft Word, Display Write, Multimate, etc....)?..... | YES | NO |



- Q 38 Can you operate two or more types of word processing software?..... YES NO
- Q 39 Do you have a working knowledge of the more advanced functions of the word processing software/equipment that you use most often (eg. merges and macros)?..... YES NO
- Q 40 Do you have a working knowledge of a spreadsheet and/or a data-base management system?..... YES NO
- Q 41 Do you know how to customize and/or create a large spreadsheet and/or a data-base management application?..... YES NO
- Q 42 Do you have a working knowledge of MS-DOS?..... YES NO
- Q 43 Do you have any other computer-related skills? (Circle number)

1 YES  
 2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 45

Q 44 IF YES, what are those skills? \_\_\_\_\_

Q 45 Overall, how much time have you spent working with computers? (Write in number of years or months)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S)

Q 46 Do you think you need more computer-related training? (Circle number)

1 YES → IF YES, Skip to Q 48  
 2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 49

Q 47 Do you think you need computer training? (Circle number)

1 YES  
 2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 49

Q 48 IF YES, do you want training in any of the following areas? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

a. WORD PROCESSING.....	YES	NO
b. DATA BASE MANAGEMENT.....	YES	NO
c. SPREADSHEETS.....	YES	NO
d. GENERAL COMPUTER CONCEPTS.....	YES	NO
e. COMPUTER PROGRAMMING.....	YES	NO
f. OTHER (Please specify).....	YES	NO

Q 49 Aside from computer training, do you want any other kind of training? (Circle number)

1 YES  
 2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 51, page 10



Q 50 IF YES, what kind of training do you want?

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The next few questions ask about the training programs available at some temporary help services.

Q 51 Did a temporary service recommend to you that you receive additional skill training? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Q 52 Do any of the temporary services with which you are registered pay any portion of the fee for outside training courses? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Q 53 Do any of the temporary services with which you are registered offer training programs? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO → IF NO, skip to Section IV, page 11

Q 54 IF YES, do they offer the following kinds of training programs? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. CROSS-TRAINING IN WORD PROCESSING AND/OR SPREADSHEET PACKAGES..... | YES | NO |
| b. INSTRUCTION IN HOW TO USE A COMPUTER.....                          | YES | NO |
| c. TYPING INSTRUCTION.....  | YES | NO |
| d. OTHER (Please specify).....  | YES | NO |

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Q 55 Have you taken any of the training offered through the temporary service(s)? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Section IV, page 11

Q 56 IF YES, what training did you receive? (Please describe the skills/systems/packages for which you received training and the length of the training program(s))

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## Section IV

In this section I will ask you about some of your other work experiences.

Q 57 In this question I would like to find out how many years since high school you have worked for pay full-time, part-time and in temporary employment. [If you have ever worked simultaneously in more than one of these arrangements (for example, if you had a full-time and a part-time job at the same time), include those year(s) or month(s) in the totals for both arrangements.] (Please write in the number of years or months you have worked in each of the following types of work arrangements. If answer is none, write 0.)

- a. FULL-TIME PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
b. EMPLOYED BY A TEMPORARY SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
c. PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)

Q 58 How many years have you worked as a clerical worker/secretary? (Write in number of years and/or months)

\_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) and/or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S)

Q 59 Do you consider clerical/secretarial work your main occupation? (Circle number)

1 YES → IF YES, Skip to Q 61

2 NO

Q 60 IF NO, what is your main occupation? (Write in answer)

Q 61 After you first began to work for pay, have you had any periods in your life when you were not in paid employment? (Circle number)

1 YES

2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 63, page 12

Q 62 IF YES, please write in the amount of time you were not in the paid workforce for each of the following reasons. [For this question, only count time out of the workforce if you had worked for pay and then stopped. If you never worked for pay before going to college or business school, do not count those years in school as time out of the workforce.] (Write in number of years or months for each item. If answer is none, write 0)

- a. TO CARE FOR CHILDREN..... \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
b. TO CARE FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.. \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
c. TO BE IN SCHOOL..... \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
d. TO TAKE A BREAK..... \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
e. UNEMPLOYED..... \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)  
f. OTHER (Please specify)..... \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS(S) \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)

For the next set of questions, I'd like for you to think about your most recent full-time, permanent job. IF YOU HAVE NEVER WORKED IN A FULL-TIME PERMANENT JOB, PLEASE SKIP TO SECTION V, PAGE 14.

Q 63 How long has it been since you last worked in a full-time, permanent job?  
(Write in number of years and/or months)

\_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) and/or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S)

Q 64 How long did you work in that job? (Write in number of years and/or months)

\_\_\_\_\_ YEAR(S) and/or \_\_\_\_\_ MONTH(S)

Q 65 What was the size of the organization/company where you worked? [Please give the total for all employees at that location, not just in the office where you worked.] (Circle number)

- 1 1 TO 5 EMPLOYEES
- 2 6 TO 20 EMPLOYEES
- 3 21 TO 100 EMPLOYEES
- 4 101 TO 500 EMPLOYEES
- 5 MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
- 6 DON'T KNOW

Q 66 In what type of industry were you working? [If you can't determine the industry, write in the main function or product of the company or organization on the line next to OTHER.] (Circle number)

- 1 MANUFACTURING (eg. clothes, paper, chemicals, furniture, pharmaceuticals, equipment, toys, etc...)
- 2 TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC UTILITIES (eg. SEPTA, Post Office, airlines, Bell, PGW, Philadelphia Electric, etc...)
- 3 WHOLESALE OR RETAIL TRADE (eg. grocery stores, department stores, electrical supply companies, etc...)
- 4 FINANCE, INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE (eg. banks, insurance companies, investment companies, etc...)
- 5 BUSINESS SERVICES (eg. advertising, personnel supply services, computer and data processing companies, etc...)
- 6 PERSONAL SERVICES (eg. hotels, laundries, funeral services, shoe repair shops, etc...)
- 7 ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION SERVICES (eg. theaters, bowling alleys, etc...)
- 8 PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED SERVICES (eg. doctors, dentists, and other health related offices, law offices, schools, colleges, libraries, social services, accounting firms, etc...)
- 9 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (eg. legislative offices, city offices, etc...)
- 10 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 67 Was this job a secretarial or clerical position? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 71

Q 68 What was your job title? (Circle number)

- 1 WORD PROCESSING OPERATOR
- 2 DATA ENTRY OPERATOR
- 3 TYPIST/SECRETARY WITHOUT WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 4 SECRETARY WITH WORD PROCESSING AND/OR OTHER COMPUTER DUTIES
- 5 SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR
- 6 RECEPTIONIST WITH WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 7 RECEPTIONIST WITHOUT WORD PROCESSING DUTIES
- 8 OFFICE CLERK WITHOUT TYPING
- 9 BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTING CLERK
- 10 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 69 Did you perform the following tasks on this job? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. TYPING (WPM: _____)                    | YES | NO |
| b. FILING                                 | YES | NO |
| c. DATA ENTRY                             | YES | NO |
| d. SHORTHAND                              | YES | NO |
| e. SWITCHBOARD OPERATION                  | YES | NO |
| f. ANSWER TELEPHONE/PROVIDE INFORMATION   | YES | NO |
| g. DICTAPHONE TRANSCRIPTION               | YES | NO |
| h. BOOKKEEPING                            | YES | NO |
| i. WORD PROCESSING                        | YES | NO |
| j. SPREADSHEET ENTRY                      | YES | NO |
| k. DATA BASE MANAGEMENT                   | YES | NO |
| l. SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS/MEETINGS         | YES | NO |
| m. PROCESS PAYROLL                        | YES | NO |
| n. PROCESS MAIL/ORDERS/CLAIMS/OTHER FORMS | YES | NO |
| o. RECEPTIONIST                           | YES | NO |
| p. PREPARE MAILINGS                       | YES | NO |
| q. PHOTOCOPY                              | YES | NO |

Q 70 Please list any other tasks you had in this job, THEN SKIP TO Q 72, PAGE 14.

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Q 71 IF YOUR LAST PERMANENT, FULL-TIME JOB WAS NOT A SECRETARIAL/CLERICAL POSITION, what kind of work did you do? (Write in the name of your position and briefly describe the main tasks you performed)

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Q 72 Which of the following reasons describes why you left your most recent full-time job? (Circle number)

- 1 LAID OFF
- 2 DISMISSED
- 3 QUIT (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 73 Were any of the following employee benefits available to you in your last permanent, full-time job?  
(Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. EMPLOYER PAID MEDICAL INSURANCE..... | YES | NO |
| b. EMPLOYER PAID DENTAL INSURANCE.....  | YES | NO |
| c. CO-PAID MEDICAL INSURANCE.....       | YES | NO |
| d. GROUP RATES ON MEDICAL INSURANCE..   | YES | NO |
| e. PENSION.....                         | YES | NO |
| f. PAID VACATION.....                   | YES | NO |
| g. DISABILITY PAY.....                  | YES | NO |
| h. PAID HOLIDAYS.....                   | YES | NO |
| i. SICK DAYS.....                       | YES | NO |
| j. DEPENDENT DAY CARE.....              | YES | NO |
| k. TUITION BENEFITS.....                | YES | NO |
| l. OTHER (Please specify).....          | YES | NO |
- \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION V

In this final section, I will ask for some background information about yourself.

Q 74 Which of the following statement best describes your current family situation? (Circle number)

- 1 SINGLE WITH NO DEPENDENTS → IF SINGLE, Skip to Q 77
- 2 SINGLE PARENT → IF SINGLE, Skip to Q 77
- 3 MARRIED/CO-HABITATING WITH NO DEPENDENTS
- 4 MARRIED/CO-HABITATING WITH DEPENDENTS

Q 75 IF MARRIED OR CO-HABITATING, what is your partner's employment status? (Circle number)

- 1 EMPLOYED FULL-TIME
- 2 EMPLOYED PART-TIME
- 3 NOT EMPLOYED → IF NOT EMPLOYED, Skip to Q 77

Q 76 IF MARRIED OR CO-HABITATING, what kind of work does your partner do? (Write in answer)

\_\_\_\_\_



Q 77 Aside from any benefits you may receive from a temporary help service, do you receive benefits from any other source? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 80

Q 78 IF YES, what is the source of the benefits? (Circle number)

- 1 MY HUSBAND'S/PARTNER'S BENEFIT PLAN  
2 MY PARENT(S)' BENEFIT PLAN  
3 MY BENEFIT PLAN FROM A PREVIOUS EMPLOYER  
4 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 79 IF YES, do you receive coverage for any of the following benefits? (Circle YES or NO for each item)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a. EMPLOYER PAID MEDICAL INSURANCE..... | YES | NO |
| b. EMPLOYER PAID DENTAL INSURANCE.....  | YES | NO |
| c. CO-PAID MEDICAL INSURANCE.....       | YES | NO |
| d. PENSION PLAN.....                    | YES | NO |
| e. DEPENDENT DAY CARE.....              | YES | NO |
| f. TUITION BENEFITS.....                | YES | NO |
| g. OTHER (Please specify).....          | YES | NO |

Q 80 How many children do you either partially or fully support? [IF YOU ARE NOT SUPPORTING ANY CHILDREN, WRITE 0 AND THEN SKIP TO Q 82.] (Write in number)

\_\_\_\_\_ CHILD(REN)

Q 81 What are their ages? (Write in age of each child)

Q 82 Aside from children, do you either partially or fully support any one else? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 84, page 16

Q 83 IF YES, what is the relation of the person or people to you? (Write in answer)



Q 84 What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Circle number)

- 1 LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL
- 2 HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE OR GED
- 3 BUSINESS/TRADE SCHOOL
- 4 SOME COLLEGE
- 5 ASSOCIATE DEGREE
- 6 BACHELOR DEGREE
- 7 GRADUATE HOURS
- 8 MASTERS DEGREE
- 9 DOCTORAL DEGREE
- 10 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 85 Are you currently enrolled in a post-secondary education institution? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 89

Q 86 IF YES, in what type of education institution are you enrolled? (Circle number)

- 1 BUSINESS OR TRADE SCHOOL
- 2 COMMUNITY, TWO YEAR, OR JUNIOR COLLEGE
- 3 FOUR YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- 4 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Q 87 Are you matriculated in a degree program? (Circle number)

- 1 YES  
2 NO → IF NO, Skip to Q 89

Q 88 IF YES, what is the degree program? (Write in answer)

\_\_\_\_\_

Q 89 What was your income FROM TEMPORARY WORK, before taxes, last month? (Circle number)

- 1 LESS THAN \$500
- 2 \$500 TO \$999
- 3 \$1,000 TO \$1,499
- 4 \$1,500 TO \$1,999
- 5 \$2,000 TO \$2,499
- 6 \$2,500 TO \$2,999
- 7 \$3,000 OR MORE
- 0 THIS IS MY FIRST MONTH IN TEMPORARY WORK

Q 90 What was your **HOUSEHOLD** income from all sources, before taxes, last month? (Circle answer)

- 1 LESS THAN \$1,000
- 2 \$1,000 TO \$1,999
- 3 \$2,000 TO \$2,999
- 4 \$3,000 TO \$3,999
- 5 \$4,000 TO \$4,999
- 6 \$5,000 TO \$5,999
- 7 \$6,000 OR MORE

Q 91 Including yourself, how many people contributed to that income? (Write in number)

\_\_\_\_ PERSON/PEOPLE

Q 92 Does all of your regular monthly income come from employment earnings (yours and/or other household members) or does some of it come from other sources (eg. unemployment insurance, social security, child support, pensions, etc...)? (Circle number)

- 1 ALL OF MY HOUSEHOLD'S REGULAR MONTHLY INCOME COMES FROM EMPLOYMENT EARNINGS
- 2 SOME OF MY HOUSEHOLD'S MONTHLY INCOME COMES FROM OTHER SOURCES

Q 93 How much did you earn from **TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT**, before taxes, in 1989? (Circle number)

- 1 LESS THAN \$5,000
  - 2 \$5,000 TO \$9,999
  - 3 \$10,000 TO \$14,999
  - 4 \$15,000 TO \$19,999
  - 5 \$20,000 TO \$24,999
  - 6 \$25,000 TO \$29,999
  - 7 \$30,000 OR MORE
- ↓  
0 NOTHING → IF NOTHING, Skip to Q 95

Q 94 For how many months were you employed by a temporary help service in 1989? (Write in number)

\_\_\_\_ MONTHS(S)

Q 95 What is your age? (Write in answer)

\_\_\_\_ YEARS

Q 96 What is your race? (Circle number)

- 1 ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 2 BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN, NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN
- 3 SPANISH OR HISPANIC ORIGIN
- 4 WHITE, NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN
- 5 OTHER (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

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For these last questions, please write in your comments. If you need more space, feel free to attach another sheet of paper.

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What do you like about working as a temporary employee?

What do you dislike about working as a temporary employee?

Please use this space to write anything else you'd like to say about your reasons for working as a temporary employee, your experiences as a temp or anything else related to this study.

**TO FURTHER ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY, THIS PAGE WILL BE FILED SEPARATELY FROM THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.**

Surveys are useful because they allow us to compare information about a large number of people. Sometimes, though, surveys are frustrating to fill out because they may not ask questions that you think are important or the answer choices may not really fit your experience. For researchers, surveys can be frustrating because they do not fully convey the real people behind the answers. Therefore, to better understand the people who are working as temporary employees, I will be interviewing some of the women who respond to this survey. The interviews will take place in each person's home (or some other mutually agreed upon place) and will last an hour or so. If you think you might be interested in talking about your experiences as a temporary employee, please circle number 1 and list your telephone number. I will call you to tell you more about the interview and to arrange a time if you decide you want to participate. **CIRCLING 1 DOES NOT OBLIGATE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW.**

1 YES, I might be willing to be interviewed. My number is:

\_\_\_\_\_

2 NO, I am not interested in being interviewed for this study.

I may follow up this study in 5 years or so to explore more about how the temporary work experience relates to job history and career development. Please provide the names of two people who would be likely to know where you are in the next five years. This information, as all information from this study, will be kept completely confidential and will only be used if we do conduct a follow-up study.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: area code (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: area code (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation in this study. To return your completed questionnaire, just fold it in half and fasten it with either tape or staples. The mailing address and postage are already provided on the back of the questionnaire. If you would like to receive a summary of the survey results, please put your name and full mailing address on the BACK OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.*

*If you wish to receive a summary of the results, put your name and address here:*

**A STUDY OF TEMPORARY WORKERS  
P.O. BOX 25264  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19119**

**END**

**FILMED**

**09 / 25 / 92**